

KENYA
THE LAND OF ILLUSION



ELEPHANTS AT HOME

F. outispace

KENYA

THE LAND OF ILLUSION

By
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FOREWORD

THIS little book, which is but an elaborated diary, was originally written for my own amusement and to fill in the idle hours when flying over the African deserts. Also I wished to bring home to my friends in Britain the compelling fascination of the country, a fascination equalled by no other land I have seen.

I have been urged by friends to publish this Journal, so that a wider public may share in my experiences of Kenya's beauty and Kenya's tragedy.

My heart! If dangers great in travel be
How can one travel and no dangers see?
That which is gained by Travellers who roam
Where can they gain as much who stay at home?
If like a shadow men a grotto love
How can they see the sun and moon above?

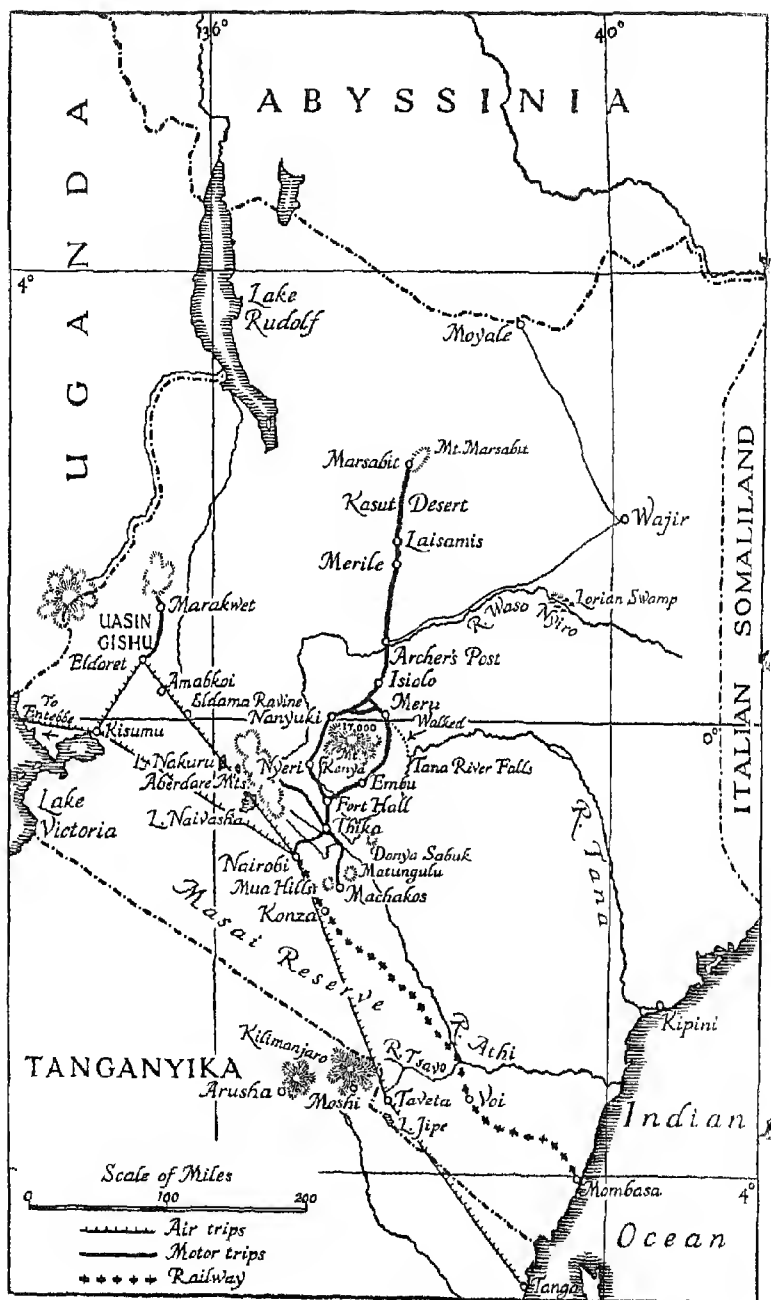
And he who fears into the sea to dive
Whence hopes he pearls and jewels to derive?
And if a well-skilled man stays in his home
From all his skill what benefit can come?
The falcon that his aerie ne'er deserts
His power to capture game in vain asserts.

Translation of "Ibn Yemen," by

BRIG.-GENERAL RODWELL.

PART I

ACROSS EUROPE—EGYPT—SUDAN—UGANDA—
KENYA—THIKA—NYERI



I

ACROSS EUROPE

THE New Year had brought its usual gift of fog with the early frost. It hung over London as a thin wisp, but in the Caterham Valley and Croydon it was a thick blanket. Imperial Airways rung us up this afternoon to say that unless it cleared, we would travel to-morrow by the "Golden Arrow" to Paris. This was a great disappointment for Toby, who was accompanying me on this visit to Kenya; he had never been in the air and was thrilled at the prospect of the long flight to Egypt and beyond. He had only recently left Stowe, and, as he was not due at Cambridge until October, we thought to improve our minds with travel, and certainly enjoy ourselves.

We took my little Peke into the park; it was cold and empty; the sun could be seen like a red disc in the yellow murk, but it certainly did not warm us.

Next morning we were cheered by the news that flying was possible; at midday we took our seats in in the "Heracles" for Le Bourget, and in Paris changed into the Rome Express on our way to Brindisi. Major Grogan was a fellow-passenger, an Irishman with much charm, who has invested his capital, also his heart, in Kenya Colony, where he is considered by many as the hope of that much harassed country.

It is perhaps singularly strange that he should have chosen Kenya wherein to bestow his life's labours, when it is recalled that in 1900 he astounded the world by accomplishing the then almost impossible feat of traversing Africa on foot from the Cape to Cairo, which feat took him three years. What unknown wonders he must have encountered on that long safari, and what untold hardships he must have endured! But one thing is certain—that Africa's strange fascination held him—particularly Kenya with its immense possibilities and charm.

All France and the north of Italy was plastered white with snow; the cold was intense; but the train was so well heated that I resolved to get out when we reached Genoa for a few minutes' fresh air. After a long stuffy night, it was 8 a.m. when Toby and I stepped on to the platform and found Major Grogan, notwithstanding a very heavy cold, walking about without a coat or hat. Even in my furs I was shivering; the weather was too bitter for enjoyment, so we returned to the train. We had scarcely taken our seats when it moved off. . . . Although the conductor had assured us that we had a twenty minutes' stop at Genoa, we left without warning, after a bare five minutes' wait! Evidently the train, which was already an hour late, wished to make up time, and therefore considerably curtailed its halt.

I had no doubt that Major Grogan had entered the train from the other end; but when he did not put in an appearance at breakfast I felt anxious; and when, on returning to our compartment, the attendant remarked that a gentleman had been left behind at Genoa, I was really worried. To be

stranded in the depth of winter in a foreign city, with a bad cold in your head, without a coat or hat, passport, money, or any of the amenities of life, was nothing short of a tragedy, even to the most seasoned traveller.

On our arrival at Rome, where we changed trains, the Imperial Airways official who met us said he had received orders from Major Grogan to collect his belongings and place them in safe custody. Evidently some good Samaritan had supplied him with money and, I hoped, a coat and hat.

At Brindisi we left the train in the early hours that chill the spirit, and made our way in the dark and pouring rain to the custom house, and then on to the small hotel opposite the quay, where we sat in silent misery waiting to hear our fate. It was blowing a gale and very doubtful when we could start. The hotel, the best that Brindisi could offer, was not what one would choose for comfort. We sat in a bare-looking hall with marble-topped tables that gave one a chill to look at, and the unshaded electric globe that hung from the ceiling diffused a sinister light, making us all look livid. At 5.30 a.m. we cheered up at the mention of breakfast. Unfortunately the electric light went out as we were making our way to the breakfast-room. We stood waiting in the dark, unable to move, till a few candles arrived, when we proceeded to eat in a sombre gloom that did not add to our hilarity. One of the passengers was a lady who, accompanied by her maid, was travelling to the Cape. She had been persuaded by a friend, apparently against her own better judgment, to try flying, being assured that Imperial Airways was the height of comfort and luxury. When

battling with the wind and rain on her way to the customs, grave doubts had entered her mind, and the long wait in that grim hotel did not allay her fears.

Captain Drew, an old friend who had twice flown me across southern seas, at length sent word that we were to start, and we took our places in the launch that was to convey us to the seaplane. It was none too easy getting aboard the "Sylvanus" in that choppy sea, and again the lady suffered. I think she must have had a game leg, as in the train she always waited till we arrived at a station before venturing to move. She experienced great difficulty in getting into the launch, and more so in getting into the seaplane. The gale had not abated and we suffered from one of the worst crossings I have ever known. Most of the passengers endured considerable discomfort, and when lunch arrived few could enjoy the meal.

It was too rough to attempt the passage through the Corinthian Canal to Athens, so we flew straight to Crete, where we came down to refuel. I thought Captain Drew looked tired, no doubt he was feeling the great strain of piloting our plane against such adverse elements, at the same time trying to save us, as far as possible, from the buffeting of the gale.

It was calmer in the Mediterranean, and we arrived at Alexandria about 10 p.m., fifteen hours after leaving Brindisi. Everyone had recovered their spirits and all enjoyed the flight over the brilliantly lit harbour, and even more so, the arrival at the Hotel Cecil, where much-needed baths and a belated, but excellent, dinner awaited us.

Our beds looked inviting, but we were not allowed

to enjoy them for long, as at 2.30 a.m. the telephone in our bedrooms woke us all up. Never did I hate a telephone more than at that moment when it seemed to screech in my ear. One could not ignore it, for it persisted in ringing till one had answered, and by then one was wide awake. At three o'clock ten sleepy passengers were assembled in the hall and packed into the 'bus that conveyed us to the "Hannibal," the great air-liner waiting to take us across the African Continent.

I think we all dozed during the two hours' flight to Heliopolis, the aerodrome that lies in the desert, a few miles outside Cairo, where we descended to refuel. Here it was that Toby and I disembarked, as we were stopping a week in Egypt, and we also looked forward to spending a few nights in our beds.

The sun was rising as we reached the Semiramis Hotel, where we promptly went to bed. As I turned over to sleep I gave a thought, a very sympathetic thought, to my late fellow-passengers who were now ploughing their way over the deserts of Egypt and the Sudan to Khartoum, where they hoped to arrive at sunset. When, at midday, after a late breakfast, Toby and I entered the hall, we found several Egyptian journalists waiting to interview me. I had forgotten that I had attained fame and sanctity in the Moslem world by my performance of the Pilgrimage to Mecca the preceding year. The secretary of H.E. the Sheikh el Islam also called on me to say His Eminence was anxious to accord me an interview, and I arranged an appointment for the following morning.

ACROSS EUROPE

My friend, Princess Abbas Halim, had invited us to spend the day at her palace in the Garden City, so Toby and I betook ourselves there at lunch-time. It was a very great pleasure to see her again. The Prince, who is a noted game-shot, was much interested in our contemplated visit to Kenya. Many fine trophies from East Africa adorned the walls of his room, also one solitary Scotch stag—a Royal—that he shot some years ago at my deer forest of Glencarron. In the afternoon Princess Abbas motored us to Ghiseh, where Toby saw the glories of the Pyramids and the Sphinx, and we had tea on the terrace of the Mena House Hotel.

Our three days in Cairo passed like summer lightning. Toby saw the bazaars, the mosques, the Boulac Museum with its wondrous treasures brought from beneath the Theban hills—treasures that made one breathless by their beauty and intricate workmanship.

After my interview with the Sheikh el Islam, I took the typed manuscript of the book I had written on my pilgrimage to the Azhar University, as His Eminence, who does not understand English, had expressed a wish to read it. I handed it over to the Sheikhs to translate into Arabic, wondering if it would meet with their approval.

I was taken to visit many colleges, and my co-religionists did all in their power to make my visit to Egypt an interesting one. When Nahas Pasha, the leader of the Wafd, called on me at the hotel and asked me to return with him to his house to tea, I was rather taken aback to find a crowd collected outside, and an army of photographers. For a day or two photos of Nahas Pasha and myself,

ARRIVAL AT LUXOR

with a few of his entourage, appeared in the native Press till they discovered some fresh incident to occupy their attention.

Not only our days but also our nights were crowded, till I began to look on flying as a rest, and yet we enjoyed every minute of it. One night we dined with Princess Abbas, who had gathered together a very charming party including Hassaneyn Bey and his delightful wife, Lutfia. Though Hassaneyn Bey is now Chamberlain to the King, his name is known throughout the world as an explorer who has added considerably to our knowledge of the old caravan routes of Africa, and has received the Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society.

The following night we dined with H.E. Chevki Pasha,¹ where I met his uncle, who was Ambassador at Berlin when the war broke out. He was the son of the hero of Plevna, Mukhtar el Ghazi, and was married to the sister of the King of Egypt. He was a very interesting man and a great gentleman, and it was a shock to me when two months later I saw his death in the paper.

Our third night we took the train to Luxor, where I was anxious that Toby should see some of the lovely temples and tombs. On our arrival in the early morning, it was pleasant to find my many friends on the station platform waiting to greet me. Among them was the Sayyid El Mahdi El Idrissi, the invasion of whose country, Asir in Arabia, was the pretext for the war between the Yemen and the Wahabbi King, Ibn Saūd, a year ago. The Imam of the little old mosque nestling among the pylons of the Luxor Temple, and my faithful Dragoman, Hamid

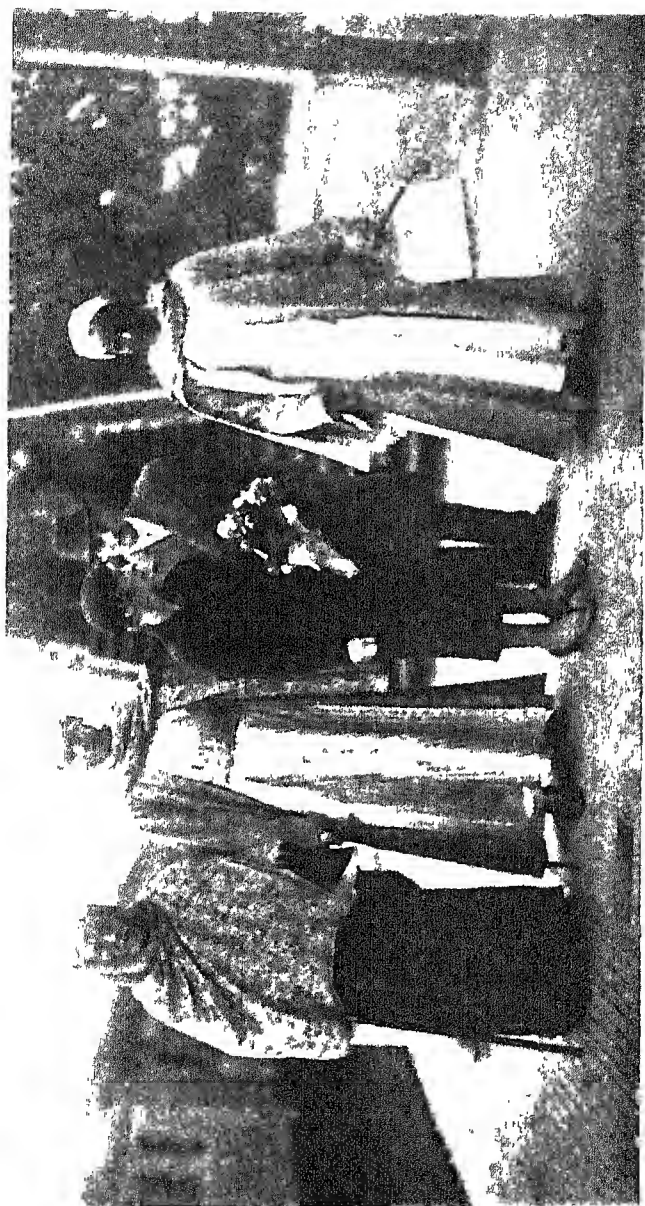
¹ Turkish Minister.

Abdalla, who has been my guide and watchdog for the last twenty years, were also there.

We spent two happy days at Luxor before taking the train on to Assouan, where we had arranged to join the Imperial aeroplane that was to fly us to Kenya.

The Cataract Hotel appeared empty. In this great palace, built to accommodate six hundred visitors, I don't think there were thirty people. It is rumoured that the Company lost £40,000 last season, and will possibly suffer a worse loss this year. It seems very sad that so few are here to enjoy the beauty of this little desert town, and the comfort of this charming hotel. The climate is perfect from November until March; the river, with its Cataract of great blue-black rocks and seething waters, is quaintly picturesque; though it has no temples to boast of, to my mind Assouan is more attractive than Luxor. In the great river, which here spreads itself into numerous channels of foaming spray and quiet backwaters, are many islands, some of them wooded, while others are gardens of flowers and fruit. Before the War both the Cataract and the Savoy Hotels were crowded with visitors drawn from America and Europe, and it was necessary to engage your rooms some time ahead. To-day the Savoy, which stands on one of the many islands, is closed, and I hear that it is falling to decay, while the Cataract is being kept open during the four winter months at a great loss, hoping for better days.

I found one or two acquaintances in the hotel, faithful old friends and admirers of Assouan, who



OLD FRIENDS W J L COMPTON

ASSOUAN

have spent their winters here for many long years before the War and would indeed feel lost if this pleasant retreat were closed to them.

The train from Luxor brought us to Assouan in time for lunch, and I arranged for Toby to visit the Great Dam above the Cataract, while I spent the afternoon with an Arab friend. Alas! Sheikh Hamoudy, he who taught me to read and intone the Koran in the original Arabic, died some years ago; I visited his widow, who, as usual, dissolved in tears as soon as I entered the room. Though I was prepared for the outburst, it is always disconcerting.

Toby joined me for a late tea at the hotel. From the wide balcony we looked across the Nile to the Libyan Desert, where the sunset was turning the sandhills to flaming pinks and reds; and always one heard the creaking of the Sakieh, the ancient water-wheel which, turned by camel or buffalo, never ceases its monotonous plaint from early dawn to sunset.

II

ACROSS AFRICA

Gone are those resolute trekkers, pilgrims who passed through
the desert . . .

Suns no longer shall smite them, nor ever the moon enchant !
Stern was the conflict, and long, but the desert has broken
and crushed them . . .

Merged are they in its fabric . . . one with the infinite veldt.

FRANCIS CAREY SLATER,

The Karroo

IT was a bright January morning, the sun giving
out a caressing warmth, when we left the
Cataract Hotel at Assouan for the aerodrome three
miles away in the desert where we were to join the
Imperial Aeroplane "Hanno" to carry us south
over Nubia, the Sudan and Uganda to Kenya, over
3,000 miles away.

Shortly after our arrival at the aerodrome, the
great dragon-fly came in sight and, after a preliminary
circling, descended gracefully to earth and disgorged
its occupants, who quickly made their way to the
breakfast-tent, as it was barely eight o'clock, and
they had left Cairo at the unearthly hour of 3 a.m.

There were several men and two women among
the passengers and I was amazed at the sight of one,
a fragile old lady who stepped briskly to the tent,
and shortly emerged from it smoking a cigarette.
Here I had thought to find Major Grogan, and was

relieved to hear that he had already gone on to Kenya, apparently none the worse for his contretemps at Genoa.

No time was wasted, and, twenty minutes after the plane's arrival, we were in our seats and away heading for the great deserts of the Sudan, mounting ever higher till the air became cooler and the mighty Nile appeared but a narrow ribbon beneath. One of my fellow-passengers who had flown from England told me that the old lady was eighty-two, and had never flown before, but being of an adventurous disposition she had taken her passage to the Cape and back without informing her relatives, and only a few days before leaving her home in Norfolk had broken to her maid—who had never been parted from her during forty-odd years—that she was to be left behind. At Croydon the Press photographers were in their serried ranks waiting to take her picture, and the reporters of the more sensational of the daily papers tried in vain to interview her, but the old lady eluded them all.

To my mind long-distance flying is very monotonous, and when the moment arrives to descend and refuel, take lunch, and smoke a cigarette, it is indeed a welcome change. After two such breaks in the long day we eventually arrived at Khartoum and were driven in the waiting motors to the Grand Hotel, where we spent the night.

It gives me a feeling of being rather like a registered parcel, the way Imperial Airways takes charge of its passengers. Each evening you find your bedroom, and where possible your bathroom, awaiting you, and the bus to convey you to and from the aerodrome. You ask no questions, you give no tips,

you luxuriate in peace, the only effort required is to rise when called at break of day.

Our fellow-passengers who had left Cairo by star-light, and had travelled for fourteen hours on end, must indeed have felt exhausted, and I asked the little lady of eighty-two if I might unpack for her, but she refused any help. Only when I knocked at her door to say dinner was ready did she confess to missing her maid!

I was given, during dinner, some glimpses into the Sudan of the past, and was appalled to hear that prior to the advent of the British the Mahdi had reduced in a few years the population of the Sudan from 8,525,000 to under two million, by murder and tribal and intertribal raiding. It was Great Britain, after the battle of Omdurman in September 1898, who began the task of restoration. By 1926 the population was estimated to be 6,469,000, and whereas before men moved in armed columns for fear of their lives they now walk the deserts in absolute security.

Though we knew we had to face an early start the next morning, Toby and I sauntered out after dinner into the soft warmth of the African night. There was no moon and the stars were like small suns lighting up the eminently respectable town of Khartoum, with its straight wide streets, avenues of trees, and high walls hiding gardens in which were the houses of the British residents. One felt the order and correctness of it all.

In a square, where four streets met, stood the very splendid statue of Gordon sitting a camel decked in the trappings of the desert. That night the statue was flood-lit; it is now fifty years since the tragedy.

Omdurman, the old Sudanese town across the Nile, from which came the dervish hordes that overwhelmed Gordon's little force, lay at peace in the desert. There is no longer enmity between white man and black.

There is a great college named after the victim of those terrible days of misunderstanding; in it black men are taught the arts and sciences of medicine, history, mathematics, all that go to make up our civilization, with a view of making them good citizens of the future, capable of assuming their share of responsibility in the management of their own affairs.

It takes a long time to convince most native races of a white people's good intentions, but these desert tribes are not lacking in common sense. Our steady policy of consolidation and just government has convinced them that the present rule is an improvement on the old days of internecine strife and war, which reduced the whole community to a state of nervous unrest, while fighting was a necessity if any members were to survive. I think it would be difficult anywhere to find a more contented people than the once wild races of the Sudan, who are proving themselves both intelligent and industrious.

At five o'clock next morning we were back at the aerodrome and started once more our flight over the Sudan, and as we ascended we saw the sun rise in a splendour of conflagration over the eastern desert. We flew over Omdurman and the battle-fields of Atbara. It was a curious coincidence of fate that one of our fellow-passengers was Harold Grenfell, whose uncle had fallen in the historic charge of the 21st Lancers during the Battle of

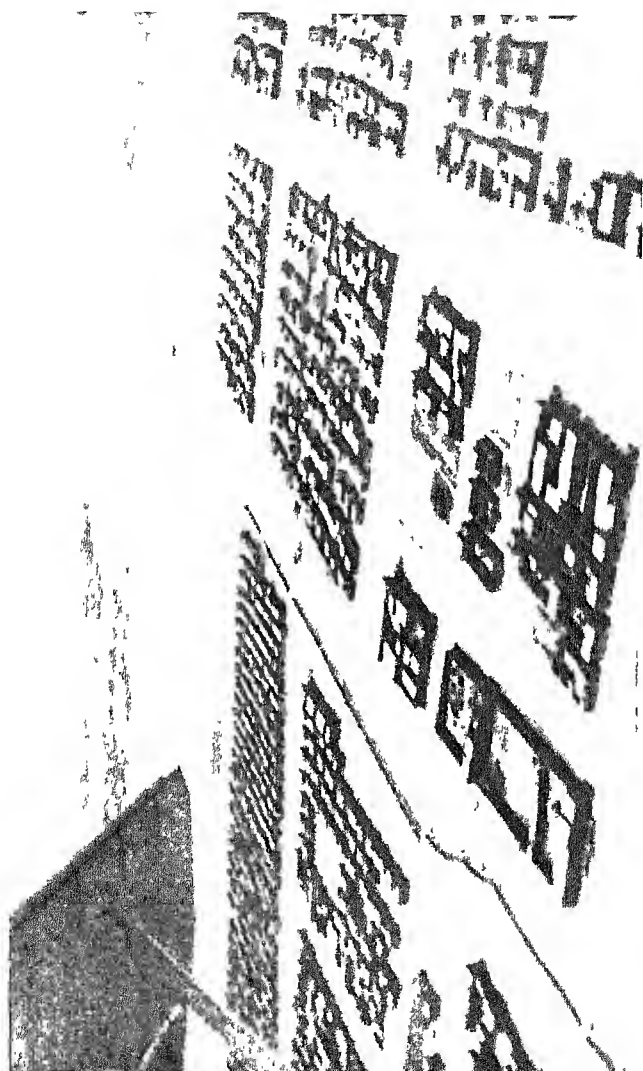
Omdurman. I could not help noticing how intently he looked down on that plain. Himself a sailor recently retired from the Navy, he was flying to South Africa.

We soon left the Nile, which here makes a long detour, and cut across the desert which had now become a vast arid plain of thorny scrub in which great fires were raging. Though we were 9,000 feet above, we could see the flames licking the dry bush and through the smoke appeared miles of blackened earth, a picture of desolation. These fires were caused by internal combustion, for no human habitation existed in the grim land.

When we again joined the Nile, it was to descend at Malakal, where we found the twin plane to ours on its way north from the Cape. We exchanged greetings with the passengers, who told us that a couple of hours to the south we would enter the game-country, where, if we were in luck, we might see herds of elephants and possibly buffalo. One lady, looking very attractive and possessing a particularly charming voice, said she had come from the Cape and not known a dull moment, and I discovered her name to be Ruth Draper who has herself held so many audiences in thrall.

We resumed our seats in excited anticipation of what lay before us, and when we saw the vast swamps of Bohr, and the "Hanno" came down to a lower height, we realized that it was to enable us to see a herd of elephants moving quietly away through the tall grass, their great ears flapping, while the females pushed their babies on in front.

The African elephant is larger than his Indian cousin, and with his long ivory tusks and his enormous



FLYING OVER ONDURMAN

OUR FIRST VIEW OF ELEPHANTS

ears often measuring 6 feet \times 4 feet making a sort of halo round his head he is a very splendid beast.

During the next two hours we flew over country containing buffalo, antelope, giraffe and again more elephants. The land now was no longer arid, but clothed with great forests, and some of the flowering trees and shrubs were very beautiful; while occasionally monkeys looked up at us from their perches in the trees and angrily jibbered.

When we descended at Juba for the night, the tropical heat made me envy the natives, fine-looking men who added to their jet-black birthday suits a loin-cloth and a spear; their women moved with great dignity, and their little round grass houses with thatched roofs were quaintly picturesque.

III

ARRIVAL IN KENYA

THE following morning we left Juba as the dawn broke, and flew low over an enchanting country of hills, forests and deep water-holes, and again saw quantities of game ; many of the lesser Kudu, the uncouth wildebeest, impala, waterbuck, and the graceful gazelle were easily distinguished, and occasionally a herd of zebra. Evidently we had left the elephant country as we saw no more of them, but came on some rhino and buffalo ; the latter stampeded at our approach, otherwise the animals took little notice.

We were now in Uganda, and rejoined the White Nile somewhere above the Murchison Falls, but it was difficult to recognize the placid river of Egypt in this torrent of foaming water bordered by tropical vegetation in which hippopotami were disporting themselves, while crocodiles heaved themselves on to the rocks, or slumbered in the sunshine. I think there must be some secret understanding between the hippopotamus and the crocodile, as the latter leaves the hippo severely alone, though it does not hesitate to attack a rhino if he can be caught at a disadvantage, and has been known to seize an elephant by the trunk when the poor beast was slaking its thirst. But Mother Hippo takes no chances, and invariably carries her little one on her back.

THE MURCHISON FALLS

We had followed the river until we sighted the Murchison Falls, which are magnificent. These Falls were discovered by Sir Samuel Baker in 1864, and were named after Sir Roderick Murchison, the then President of the Royal Geographical Society, and they have been described by a well-known writer as "one of the finest spectacles of unspoilt nature remaining in Africa, if not in the world . . . the whole volume of the Nile hurls itself through a cleft barely twenty feet in width, and falls in a series of perpendicular cascades into a foaming abyss, heaving and boiling in a very paroxysm of fury."¹

Our pilot, Captain Alcock, circled twice over these marvellous Falls to enable us to take in their full beauty, and I think it was due to the little old lady that we were given this treat.

On we sped over the jungle country, and shortly after descending to refuel at Kampala, the commercial capital of Uganda, we sighted Lake Victoria Nyanza, an inland sea about the size of Ireland. It is the birthplace of the Nile and perhaps the second largest lake in the world.

The legend of marine monsters which attaches to all inland lakes is not missing here, the legend that the Victoria Nyanza is inhabited by a monster, which the natives hold in such fear and awe that it is difficult to get them to talk on the subject. Some years ago an unidentified creature was seen lashing the water near Jinja by Sir Clement Hill—a Foreign Office official—when making a tour of Uganda. He mentioned its comparatively small head, and definite neck. Again another Englishman caught a glimpse of what he took to be a python of abnormal size.

It is only in recent years that the African forests have yielded the okapi and the pigmy elephant to

¹ *A Game Warden among his Charges*, by Colonel Pitman.

ARRIVAL IN KENYA

astonish scientists, and if the great forests can preserve their secrets, what may not the mighty ocean and the lake waters be hiding in their unsounded depths?

It was in 1858 that the explorer Speke discovered these waters.

Speke was a Devon man, the country that gave birth to Drake and Raleigh and many another gay adventurer who have made history. He was an officer in the East India Service, when, with Captain Burton, he started from Zanzibar to search for the source of the Nile. They endured terrible hardships on their long journey through the Tanganyika country, tortured by insect bites and blistered feet, weakened by fever and deserted by their guides.

When they reached Lake Tanganyika Burton was a very sick man, and Speke so blinded by an inflammation of the eyes, that, as he pathetically remarked, "The lake can be seen in all its glory by everyone but me." After resting at a place called Kaza, Burton was found too ill to move and was left behind. Speke, inspired by the great hope of finding the Nile source, continued his way north till the glorious day arrived, when in the dawn of a summer morning he climbed a hill and saw the great Lake stretched beneath him.

Four years later he and Grant reached the source of the Nile at the north-east end of the Lake. In olden days the Nile was, according to the Hindoo Vedas, supposed to rise in the mountains of the moon, the mysterious realm known as Chandrasthan, and Speke in his journal says: "It is remarkable that the Hindoos christened the source of the Nile Amara, which is the name of a country at the north-eastern corner of the Victoria Nyanza. This I think show clearly that the ancient Hindoos must have

THE GREAT LAKE

had some kind of communication with both the northern and southern ends of the Lake."

Speke's great achievement is commemorated by an inscription on the rocks at a point where the Lake waters pass in a smooth glissade, as if it were a mass of polished ice, over the Ripon Falls on its long journey of 4,000 miles through Uganda, the Sudan and Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea.

Below the Falls is a cauldron of roaring water, of eddies, and foam-splashed rocks, while the river gathers itself into a mighty flood, crashing through a savage ravine, to be lost to sight in the vast forest that bounds the horizon.

We lunched at the local hotel at Kisumu, which was crowded with miners, whose talk of the goldfields so thrilled Toby that he decided, in the impetuosity of youth, that his future must be spent gold-mining, with game-hunting thrown in to vary the monotony.

After lunch we returned to take our seats in another and smaller plane that bore us to Nairobi, as the hangars there are not large enough to accommodate the great air-liners.

Flying at a great height we crossed a mountainous country, very thickly forested, and soon found ourselves over the famous Rift Valley; that immense canyon with its chain of lakes that pierces Africa from Beira on the Indian Ocean, through Abyssinia and the Red Sea, eventually to lose itself in the Dead Sea and the Jordan Valley.

So clear was the air here that we could, with little discomfort, view the beautiful panorama extending below us of well over one hundred miles—always the vastness of Africa, the land of infinite distances. To the east, Lake Naivasha, fringed with papyrus and

ARRIVAL IN KENYA

water-lilies, looked very attractive, deeply ensconced in mountains whose volcanic activities I am told are not entirely dead, as steam juts out of the land for no apparent reason. At one end of the Lake is a cave known locally as the "Devil's Breath," whence at certain hours issues a poisonous gas which in a few seconds will kill any living thing that approaches. The cave is surrounded and heaped with skeletons of animals that have fallen victims to the foul fumes.

These dense forests are the home of the lion, the elephant and the elusive bongo, one of the most graceful of antelope.

At what precise moment we crossed the Equator I am not sure. Probably we were sitting on it—if one can sit on the Equator—while lunching at Kisumu. The smaller plane was not nearly so steady as the "Hanno," and I think that everyone was thankful when we reached our journey's end.

It was quite dark when we approached Nairobi, and our bumpy journey had made several passengers feel distinctly ill.—When the steward, with no doubt the best intentions, proposed that as a treat we were to fly round and over the town, we protested, as all we desired was to quickly reach our destination after such a long and trying day. More excitement however was in store for us ; owing to the drought, the grass surrounding the aerodrome was arid and dry—and in order to guide our plane in the darkness to a safe landing-berth flares had been placed at intervals, which unfortunately set fire to the grass. Little imagination is needed to describe how quickly the fires spread and how terrifying it all appeared from the air in the darkness of the starlit night. However, we made a safe and perfect landing.

ARRIVAL AT NAIROBI

At Nairobi we were met by my nephew, Hubert Barry, and bidding farewell to Captain Alcock and our fellow-passengers, more especially to the intrepid old lady who had proved a most interesting and charming companion, we entered the car and were driven to the Muthaiga Club—on the outskirts of Nairobi—as Hubert explained that it was too late that night to motor out to Kianzabe, his coffee estate beyond Thika. Secretly I was thankful to await the daylight, as I had just read in the local paper at Kisumu that a full-grown lioness had been seen on the Thika road, and I had visions of her springing on us from the dark shadows, though I am assured that an unwounded lion never attacks unless he is a man-eater.

To illustrate how lions will hesitate to attack mankind unless driven by fear or hunger, I am told of a settler whose cattle were being harried by lions, who sallied forth, accompanied by a native, to seek the culprit and exact the penalty. Seeing a yellow streak stealing through some grass he followed on, and while waiting a chance to fire, he noticed that his servant was quaking with terror. Looking for the cause, he suddenly became aware that they were faced, with no possibility of escape, by five full-grown lions. It was useless to shoot; the only chance was to stand perfectly still. Luckily the native realized the position, and did not move. For what seemed eternity they looked the lions straight in the eyes until the great cats turned and slunk away into the bush.

The Masai have a tradition that an unwounded lion will never charge at a man if he stands his ground, but that the slightest movement of shrinking will bring the beast on top of him. The above anecdote seems to prove the Masai theory.

IV

MAKING ACQUAINTANCE WITH KENYA

THE next morning we left our extremely comfortable quarters at the Muthaiga Club to have a look round the town. I am told that Nairobi grew up by accident in this dusty plain, on the threshold of the highlands. Within a few miles are several sites that might surely have been more attractive.

It happened that while constructing the railway from Mombassa the engineers in charge, having completed over 300 miles of permanent way, thought this spot a suitable railhead and a convenient place for the dumping of their stores and making their shunting-grounds, never dreaming of it as the future capital of a great colony. But while they were busy consolidating their work, a township of ramshackle shops, houses and hotels arose, and when in 1907 the capital was moved from Mombassa, there was no alternative but to make this town the headquarters of the Government. Now both the Government and the Municipality are working to improve and widen the streets, erecting fine buildings and planting trees, but whatever their efforts, Nairobi will for ever remain the unworthy capital of beautiful Kenya.

Before returning to the Muthaiga Club we looked in at Torr's Hotel, which is owned by Major Grogan,

A COCKTAIL AT TORR'S

and which can boast the most fashionable cocktail bar in the country. Here, between the hours of mid-day and one o'clock, you will find assembled all the rank and beauty of the neighbourhood, added to which you can choose your own cocktail and be quite sure that it will prove a good one. A long drink named Pimms No. 1 is very refreshing after a hot morning spent shopping or otherwise in that dusty town.

I had arranged to meet Hubert and Toby at Torr's shortly before one o'clock, but when I looked in I could not see them. The crowd was so large, it was difficult to find one's friends, but I joined a table where sat Major Grogan with Gladys Lady Delamere, Lord Errol and one or two others who were strangers to me. It was amusing to hear Major Grogan tell of his experiences when in Genoa. Seemingly everyone put their purses and wardrobes at his disposal, but the one thing he particularly desired—an aeroplane to take him to Rome to catch up with our train—they refused on the grounds that the snow was too deep to take off, and nothing he could say would shake their resolution.

After lunching at the Club I gladly shook the dust of Nairobi off my feet and entered the car for Kianzabe, the large coffee estate Hubert shares in partnership with the MacMasters. It is over fifty miles away and we drove past numerous coffee plantations, and, although it was only January, these were a sorry sight, as all the country lies parched from the terrible drought that is destroying everything. Except for a few short showers in November no rain has fallen for many months; acres of trees are without flower or berry.

MAKING ACQUAINTANCE WITH KENYA

Much of the lower country round Nairobi was planted with coffee during the boom after the War when prices were very high, and the shallow soil is incapable of resisting the least drought. A great deal of land that now carries coffee will, I am told, shortly revert to its wild state. I fear that many fortunes have been lost, and labour wasted, in this unprofitable soil.

We drove on through the arid land, and as this country is mostly inhabited by Europeans we met few natives, but I was struck by the easy walk and fine carriage of those we passed. For clothes they wear skins, softened with castor oil, which, mixed with the red clay of the country, is also well rubbed into their bodies. The men often have their front teeth filed to sharp points which gives them a hungry wolfish look; some of them wore attractive belts embroidered in tiny beads of many colours, and both men and women had shaven heads. They were the Wakikuyu tribe, and the women's ears stood out stiff with loops of pink beads threaded on wire, like small bracelets—often as many as twenty or more in each ear. The female beauties have their heads plucked till they resemble ebony billiard balls, which shows they are prepared to suffer for appearance sake, and that feminine vanity is the same the whole world over.

The drive from Nairobi to Thika is perhaps the dullest in all Kenya, and Thika itself cannot boast of its beauty. It is mainly inhabited by Indians, and has its uses; a post office, a garage, several tailors, and a large "store," which store can supply you with anything within reason. The Blue Post Hotel stands a half-mile outside the town on a

picturesque site between the Thika and Chania rivers, and it was here that most of the film "Trader Horn" was made. Also thirty years ago it was here that the battle took place between the Kikuyu tribesmen and the Government, when a Government official was killed. Up to 1905 the country to the north of Kenya and the Tana River remained a closed district.

Some miles beyond Thika we crossed the Athi River where a short time ago Hubert was the spectator of a terrible fight between a rhino and a crocodile which had seized the former's leg. In point of weight they were evenly matched, both a crocodile and a rhino, when full-grown, averaging about two tons. But the rhino was at a disadvantage on a slippery bank, and after a battle lasting two and a half hours the poor beast was dragged under the water.

We now entered a more smiling country; the brilliant verdure and stately trees that marked the sinuous course of the Athi River, the flat-topped acacias and mimosa that dotted the plain gave way on our right to the forests of a massive hill. We skirted the base of the mountain Donya Sabuk, thickly wooded and seared by deep ravines, where rhino and buffalo roam in safety, as Lady MacMillan, the owner of this mountain and much land around, keeps it strictly preserved.

We were now approaching the Kianzabe estate, and turned into a lovely tropical garden; here was the home of the MacMasters where we stopped for tea on our way to Hubert's house at the other end of the property. Toby and I both appreciated our beautiful surroundings. Though the sun scorched, the heat was not oppressive, for there was a cool freshness in the breeze, and, as we were five thousand

feet above sea-level, I discovered that the nights were sometimes quite chilly. In the garden was a shower of *bourgainvillea* of a glorious pink unknown in Egypt, and frangipani with its white scented blossom. The poinsettias which up till now I have always despised, were here great bushes of double flowers in red, in pink, and in a pale primrose yellow. The *Caes Alpinea* made the air alive with its wonder of orange and scarlet, and the Morning Glory flung in tangled riot its lovely blue over the veranda. These were but a few of the flowers that made the garden a joy to look at, while English roses filled the air with perfume.

But occasionally the Serpent enters this Eden, and not many weeks ago a large python was killed as it was taking a stroll through the grounds. There is a swamp some way below where the papyrus grows quite sixteen feet high, and very dense, offering a happy home to the python and the hippo, while occasionally a crocodile will walk across from the neighbouring stream in search of a stray goat, or any victim equally succulent to satisfy his craving for a change of diet from fish. Leopards prowl round the house when dark, and no dog is safe unless shut up. The MacMasters lost a beloved Airedale, who one night escaped through the window to sleep on the veranda, and was promptly carried off by a leopard.

After driving through many acres of coffee, we descended a steep hill leading to a lake, and then ascended an even steeper one with a difficult curve at the top, which Hubert explained was a dam to hold back the lake waters when the rains come. The lake was planted with bamboos, cannas, and flowering

trees, and the hills around were covered in bush and long grass, where a short time ago the lion roamed, but they have gone across the Athi River to the Yatta plains, and now only the leopard remains.

On arriving at Hubert's house we thought it very large and imposing. He had been living many years in a tiny shanty and was determined, when he built himself a house, he would make up for past discomforts. This perhaps accounted for its space and luxury; his living-room must be one of the largest in the colony. All the rooms were big and cool, while the veranda which surrounded the house was wide enough to take our meals on when the spirit moved us. The garden is yet to be made, but the view from the house was so delightful that I felt even a garden must take second place.

Beneath us flowed the Athi River whose waters were hidden, but whose banks were a tropical jungle of beauty, beyond which stretched the Yatta plains all golden yellow, here and there broken by great black jagged rocks, pointed like needles. The plains are lost in the distance as they merge into the faint blue Ythanga hills. Lions roam on the Yatta plains, and among the conical-shaped hills are rhino, but for some mysterious reason they never cross the Athi River. Perhaps they do not care for the human scent which it is possible the breeze occasionally carries to them. To the east the Matangulus, rich in plantations of maize and banana trees, are always a vivid splash of green from the copious rains that descend on these hills. To the west the "Mountain of Mist," Donya Sabuk, rears its head in lonely splendour while more than a hundred miles away Mount Kenya occasionally reveals its icy peaks.

MAKING ACQUAINTANCE WITH KENYA

In the cool of the evening we visited the coffee shambas. Here the soil is deep and enriched with manure, and every tree carefully tended. All of them were heavily laden with berries, and the crop promised a short time ago to be magnificent, but now they are being daily stripped of thousands of berries to enable them to withstand the drought. It seemed a tragedy after the care lavished on them to see the lovely berries withering and the glossy foliage turn yellow.

V

OUR SAFARI TO TANA RIVER FALLS

AS the rain seemed farther away than ever, Hubert suggested we take advantage of the fine weather to make a tour up-country. Armed with a fishing-rod and heavy rifle, and accompanied by his Kikuyu boy Mwangi, we started off in the Chevrolet, while James Walker, who is the young manager on the Kianzabe Estate, took Toby in his Ford lorry, packed with everything needed for a short safari. James is a noted shot, once having killed two charging buffalo with a right and left. He also knows a great deal about the trees and flowers of Kenya, which is not surprising as he is the grandson of that noted authority on trees, Sir Herbert Maxwell of Monreith. Our object was the Tana River Falls. James and Toby were preceding us to Meru, where they hoped to collect information and make what preparations were possible for the safari we were contemplating. Toby in the exuberance of his eighteen years was beside himself with joy at the prospect, and hoped to accomplish great things with his new cinema camera.

On leaving the village of Thika we crossed the Chania River which, rising in the Aberdares, here joins the Thika, whose waters are spanned by a bridge revealing the beautiful river, with its banks of wild bananas, feathery palms, and tangled undergrowth.

Close by are the Falls, a great cascade, with a drop of 90 feet to the turbulent water below.

When in 1902 the Uganda Railway was first opened for traffic, there came to Kenya a large influx of visitors; some of them sportsmen in search of trophies in heads and skins, and others anxious to acquire land on which to settle.

Four years earlier a terrible famine, followed by smallpox, had reduced the Kikuyu tribe by more than half their numbers, and a vast extent of their country was uninhabited, the previous occupants being mostly dead. This land, which was rapidly reverting to desert, was offered to the settlers. The official reason given to Parliament by the Commissioner of the Protectorate was that . . . "In the last famine large plantations were abandoned, and subsequently the owners, instead of attempting to repair the damage done to the land, went to other districts."

Apparently the Kikuyu did not see eye to eye with the Government, for many years later they issued a memorandum which they presented to the Parliamentary Commission in 1924. . . .

When the Whitemen first came, we did not understand that we were to be deprived of any of our land, nor that they had come to stay. A small piece of land here and there was sold voluntarily by its owners to a few of the first pioneers in the time of the Imperial British East African Company. When the British Government took over the administration of the country we still were unaware that our possession of our land would be questioned or challenged. Then from 1902 increasing numbers of Whitemen arrived and portions of our land began to be given out in farms . . . these lands were not bought from the Kikuyu owners, and any compensation they received was quite inadequate. The natives on them had either to

become squatters on their own land, or else move off. Some are now wanderers moving from one estate to another.

The time that elapsed between the confiscation of the land and the time when the Kikuyu lodged their protest to the authorities can possibly be accounted for by the fact that agitators had got hold of them, and persuaded them to air their supposed grievances. And the wording of the memorandum seems to justify this view.

Ten years have passed since the memorandum was presented, and one hopes old sores are forgotten, for the Wakikuyu yet have a very extensive and rich country to cultivate. They are protected against enemies who in the past waged ceaseless warfare, their lives and possessions are safe, while time and again the "Whitemen" have rescued them in the lean years of drought and famine.

We travelled through miles of cultivated land where a short time ago roamed antelope and game of every description, and much of the wild beauty of this country is now a legend of the past. The red soil made the only splash of colour in the sun-stricken land, and after passing through some coffee estates, varied by sisal plantations, the mature sisal looking like giant pineapples with tall spikes, we entered the native reserve which is of enormous extent, and embraces some of the best, deepest and richest soil in Kenya. The natives grow chiefly maize, millet and bananas, but they are thriftless agriculturalists, and put nothing back into the soil, though they own large herds of cattle. When the soil is exhausted

they move on to fresh pastures. In olden days they cut down all the timber, and destroyed great forests, but never attempted to replace the woods they so wantonly ruined.

The native chiefly values his livestock as being the embodiment of his wealth. He buys his wives and does all payments with his cattle and goats. All that gold connotes to the European, his flocks and herds do to the native; for them he would pawn his very soul, forgetting in the old days that the possession of this form of wealth might not improbably cost him his life. Fowls are rarely met with, the reason possibly being that in the raiding-days the crowing of a cock would betray the whereabouts of the homestead to the enemy.¹

They are fatalists, and believe in a god who is represented to them by a great mountain or forest, and they are careful never to befoul the mountain or destroy anything in that particular forest, and they occasionally offer a goat in sacrifice.

One never sees a grave, for most of the tribes cast their dead and dying out to be devoured by the hyenas. As these brutes are the living tombs of relatives, the natives are averse to killing them, or even to touching the carcass when dead. The cruel practice of throwing out the aged and dying arises from a superstition that any hut in which a death takes place must be destroyed.

These savages bear pain with amazing pluck, and recover from the most terrible wounds. Mrs. Mac-Master told me that on one occasion her gardener did not come to work, sending a message that his boy had been bitten by a crocodile. Thinking it was an excuse to shirk, for two days she took no notice,

¹ *With a Prehistoric People*, by W. S. Routledge.

A CROCODILE SEIZES A BOY

but on the third day the man brought the child up in a sack, and she nearly fainted at the appalling sight, as the little fellow was worn to a skeleton, his thigh bitten through, and most of his inside hanging out. While his mother had been washing clothes in the stream at the foot of the garden, the child had been seized by a crocodile and the mother and crocodile had between them almost pulled the little victim in half. The only possible thing was to rush the sufferer to the hospital at Nairobi, and the long drive over the rough road must have been torture, but the child, still carried in the sack in his father's arms, never uttered a sound. Though the doctors had at first thought it was a hopeless case the boy has recovered, but he will bear the horrible marks of the cruel teeth to his dying day.

We motored on through the Native Reserve of endless maize and banana plantations and up and down low hills in which nestled thatched huts often in groups of six or eight, and generally surrounded by a high palisade of sharp-pointed sticks to prevent leopards from entering when on their night prow. The natives carry knives, and are skilful with their bows and arrows. The latter they tip with a deadly poison they obtain from the euphorbia, a tree shaped like a massive candelabra, the tips of whose branches exude the thin dangerous liquid.

We passed through coffee plantations with little houses surrounded by gardens of oleanders, and flowering shrubs, denoting their European inmates; also shambas of the forbidding-looking sisal to which distance lends enchantment, as far away it gives to the landscape a soft blue tinge.

Occasionally we skirted the edge of great forests

through which meandered streams. Some of these can be dignified by the name of rivers, and in them trout, both brown and rainbow, have been introduced. These trout, brought from the peaty burns and rivers of Scotland, grow with astonishing rapidity in the cool waters that descend from the glaciers of the Mountain.

As Hubert is an expert fisherman we pulled up the car, and heedless of the warning, "Beware of Rhino," we penetrated the green depths of the wood beside the stream in search of pools, but the trout ignored the tempting flies, and as we came on fresh rhino spoor, and the brute was probably close by hidden in the thick vegetation, we hastily beat a retreat. Later on we heard that the day before a native had been killed at the spot where we left our car.

Many of the trees we passed have hollow boles placed in their forks or hanging from their branches. These cylindrical barrels are the hives the natives make use of to collect the honey of the wild bees. They blow smoke in through the many crevices of the boles and the bees go away stupefied; they then seize the honey, no provision being left for the poor bees who have lost the result of their labour. The careless natives often set fire to the trees while smoking out the bees, and the damage resulting is very serious in this dry country.

The practice of smoking out bees is the origin of almost every bush fire in Africa. It is a practice which the Forestry Department have for years endeavoured to rigidly suppress, but the Home politician is weak in the matter and looks upon it as an intolerable interference with native rights. Very considerable damage has been done to sisal estates as the result of

the wanton carelessness of the natives, to say nothing of the great tracts of forest that have been destroyed.

Sometimes the bees build their combs in the living camphor trees, for in their old age the mighty trunks are hollow as an ancient English oak. These combs would never be discovered if it were not for the cunning of the honey-bird, whose favourite food is the wild honey which he cannot extract from its hiding-place except through the agency of man. The bird does his share of the joint business by leading his human allies to the spot where rests the hidden honey. This he accomplishes by hopping from branch to branch in the desired direction, all the time twittering loudly. The bird flies from tree to tree, and the full significance of his manœuvres is soon apparent to the natives, who at once follow him with a burning torch from the cooking fire or a box of matches for the purpose of smoking out the bees if they happen to be at home. On arriving at the cache, the little bird indicates the spot by flying round and round, then swinging himself head down, or, perched on an adjacent branch, he will stop chirping and watch expectantly for the feast to come. The honey-bird looks on it as a matter of business and trusts his partners to give him his share.

If the bees are there, they are soon bemused with the smoke arising from the green leaves and fly away, sometimes half-heartedly landing a sting on their aggressors. As soon as the whole nest is exposed, the comb full of delicious wild honey mixed up with leaves, grubs and all manner of mess is scooped into a cooking-pot brought for the purpose. The honey is eaten in the dirty condition in which it happens to be obtained, often black with age and smoke. The

natives never fail to give the bird his share ; a piece of comb is placed on the ground and the little bird, more fastidious than the natives, after carefully removing the leaves and grubs, enjoys the honey he has earned so well. The honey-bird is small and his feathers are a drab brown, but he is blessed with a long memory and he never forgives an injustice. There is a legend that once a man was mean and cheated him of his share of honey. But a day came when the bird took his revenge. That day he chirped and hopped till he had drawn the man's attention ; he then piloted him to an old stump of tree with a deep hole. As there were no signs of bees about, the man thrust his hand in to feel for the honey, but a puff-adder met him—and he died.

During the War, some German engineer conceived the original idea of drafting the bees in Tanganyika into their service to harass our Troops. The German Askaris, who were trained bee-keepers, gathered several hundred swarms and attached them to trees along the trail where they awaited a convoy that was bringing ammunition and supplies to our soldiers. The bees' nests were connected by wires strung in sequence and running back to a central location in the bush, where waited the engineer, complete with his switches and dry-cell battery. When the scouts signalled the approach of the British Convoy, the engineer switched an electric shock into the nests, and at once millions of angry bees, wasps and hornets swept down on the astonished cavalcade—mules, horses, oxen, stampeded in their agony, overturning the munition wagons, as they madly rushed into the veldt to die an excruciating death. Also white men and black perished in torture ; none sur-

vived the terrible ordeal, and the faces of the dead were unrecognizable.

When all was over, the Germans drove off the bees by a smoke screen and collected the spoils of this strange and horrible battle waged by their winged allies, thus gaining a victory without a shot being fired, and amassing some very valuable loot.

We reached the outskirts of Fort Hall, a Government Station struggling on the slope of a hill. I believe Fort Hall was the first official fort built by us at that time on the border of the outer marches. This area, once the battle-ground of raid and counter-raid, is now one of the richest settled areas in Kenya.

It is named after a young Englishman, Frank Hall, a nephew of the famous Lord Goschen; he started life in the Bank of England, but finding the routine too dull, his adventurous spirit led him to this country, where he entered the service of the Imperial Company of British East Africa. Here among the lone hills, fearing neither man nor beast, he established this station, where he eventually died, leaving behind him a record of pluck and endurance that helped win for Britain her place in this bit of Africa's huge continent.

VI

MOUNT KENYA

SKIRTING the town we crossed the Tana River, which is here called the Sagana, where I get my first view of Mount Kenya, rising above the mist, its snow peaks white against a turquoise sky, its lower slopes hidden in cloud.

Fort Hall lies at the parting of the ways, a sort of junction from whence you can choose the road, either right or left, that encircles the mountain. If you set out to follow round its mighty base, you will have travelled something over 200 miles before returning to your starting-point.

Choosing the left-hand route, we entered a beautiful country where we were continually crossing streams, and we meandered through valleys, forests and plains, while always the wonder of Kenya towered above us, aloof and inscrutable, in a splendour of isolation.

To the presence of this great volcano and its virgin forests is due the equable climate, the rainfall, the rich soil. Kenya Mountain is to Kenya what the Nile is to Egypt. Below its eternal snows lies a moor-like country, usually enveloped in mist, gradually merging into the bamboo belt which surrounds the mountain, giving place in turn to the dense forest which covers the lower slopes, and which once extended far beyond its present limits.

THE OLD FOREST FOLK

Native tradition indicates that formerly this land was very sparsely populated ; the Cheeka alone claim to have been the original inhabitants, and even they admit that in the olden days a race now extinct dwelt in the forests. From all accounts this race was small in stature, very hairy, and lived by hunting and bee-keeping. Once the Agumba were very numerous, but they gradually dwindled away with the curtailment of the forest, till only a few old men and women were left.

The plantain birds which inhabit the Kenya forests in large numbers are supposed to be the souls of this ancient race, and their song is the original language of a people now dead.

I cannot imagine this land without its mountains from whose heights flow the waters which form the great rivers and cooling streams that make the country not only very lovely, but also a wonderland of game and a paradise for fishermen. It is to the mountains of Kenya and the Aberdares that we owe the debt.

Toward sunset we fished the Guru River where it flows swiftly beneath a native village. In one pool Hubert succeeded in landing two brown trout, each fish averaging two and a half pounds.

An avenue of tall trees, revealing here and there a flower-girt villa, shows us that we have reached Nyeri, and turning right-handed through the flaming mass of great cannas that lined the road on either side we arrived at the Outspan Hotel in time for a bath and dinner, and this charming hostel run by the Walkers is so comfortable that we arranged to remain two

MOUNT KENYA

nights and explore the country round. We are at an altitude of 6,000 feet ; the extra height makes the evenings chilly, and the great open fire in the sitting-room is very welcome. In Spain, many years ago, I had met Lady Betty Walker, so we renewed acquaintance. She has two attractive children who have never yet seen England, as the hotel remains open all the year and absorbs a great deal of their parents' time and attention.

This morning I got a glorious view of Kenya which had been mostly hidden by haze these last days. The second highest mountain in Africa, it looked magnificent, rising alone out of the great plain, its lower slopes covered in dense forests, its peaks in eternal snow. Its height is slightly under 18,000 feet. It was first climbed in 1900 by Sir Halford Mackinder, assisted by Swiss guides especially brought over for the purpose, and the ascent took two months to accomplish.

Before time was measured the peak of Kenya was even higher than it is now. In later geological history the destruction of the crater, and the combined action of wind, rain, and glaciers through the ages lowered the peak by several thousand feet. "Kenya as a volcano was in an advanced state of decay during the glacial period of north-western Europe ; its upbuilding and crater had been formed and destroyed before the upheaval of the Alps."¹

When in 1848 a pious missionary announced the discovery of Kilimanjaro with its great ice cap, and when a year later an equally good man reported a snow-clad mountain, the Kegnia, they were both denounced as liars, while scientists in Europe proved

¹ *The Geology of Kenya*, by Professor Gregory.

NATIVE NICKNAMES

to their complete satisfaction that ice in the tropics was a physical impossibility, but when thirty years later Joseph Thomson, a young Scottish explorer, obtained a view of Kenya's "entrancing, awe-inspiring beauty" scepticism as to the snow-clad mountain died.

Kenya was always known to the natives by the name of "Kiriwa Nyanga"—the place of the ostrich, because the white snow of the mountain made them think of the white feathers in the wing of the male ostrich. From the romantic name which was too subtle for English tongues was derived the word "Kenya." The natives have their own nicknames for persons as well as mountains and often they are very apt.

Mervyn Ridley is known as the "root of a banana tree," because he has made fruitful a bare hill-side. A lady of aggressive energy is the "Porcupine," while Henry Tarlton went by the name of "Smoke" on account of his short but fiery temper.

VII

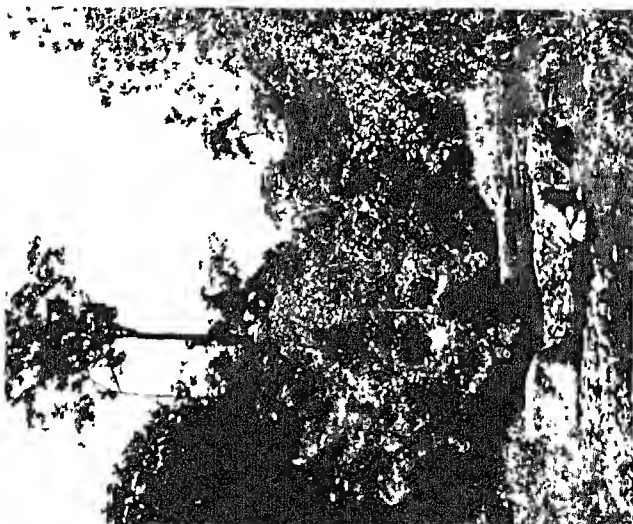
A FISHING EXPEDITION

SHORTLY after the day broke, with sandwiches and a bottle of beer to sustain us, we motored through the Native Reserve to where the road ends and we faced a long and hard walk to the Nyeri Chania River 5 miles away. The country was hilly, and no sooner had we climbed one escarpment than we had to descend to reach the next, and occasionally we negotiated a ravine, which was a tangled mass of great ferns, bamboos, papyrus and aromatic shrubs.

In one place we saw a field of maize flattened out and ruined ; only the day before, a herd of elephants had emerged in broad daylight from their forest haunts and trampled it down.

Nyeri was once the heart of the elephant country. Now the huge beasts have retreated into the inner jungle and actively resent the intrusion of their ancient rights. Also some years ago a white hunter, greedy to secure the ivory, shot the great bull, which act the females have never forgiven. The elephant memory is long, and this herd look on mankind as the eternal enemy.

As it was considered unsafe to cross the field we had to make a wide detour. When we reached the edge of the forest to which we must make our way, to descend to the river, I was thrilled by the beauty



NYERI CILANIA RIVER



WILD BANANA TREE

revealed. On our left were tall feathery bamboos whose stems were as thick as a man's arm. On our right the ground, a garden of flowering trees and shrubs, sloped sharply to the unseen river a thousand feet below, while across the valley we looked on wooded hills losing themselves in the far distance.

It is difficult, in face of such profusion, to believe that February is a lean time for the flowers of Kenya. What must the country appear after the rains, when all is a carpet of brilliant green and every tree and shrub aflame with bloom!

On being assured there were no elephants to fear, and that leopards rarely showed themselves in daylight, we threaded our way through the forest by an old track made by the jungle folk, the two natives accompanying us occasionally clearing the way with their broad knives. Some of the trees were noble monarchs of the forest, their great trunks rising a straight 50 feet before they started spreading their limbs, their roots sprawling across our path forming arched buttresses wherein a man could shelter for a night, or even light a fire. Acacias, cedars, and every variety of palm made a tangle through which twined creepers of trailing vines, ferns, and long bearded lichens in profusion, while at our feet grew wild balsams and delicate begonias.

All was silent in the impenetrable green dusk of the forest, and in silence we made our way down the hill till at last we got a glimpse of the river. On reaching it the banks were so thickly overgrown it was impossible to fish, and we had to slash our way through the jungle a good 200 yards to a pool where Hubert tried his luck, while I lay, happily tired, to watch him.

A FISHING EXPEDITION

Close to the river I discovered a swamp in which grew tall purple orchids, some standing 8 to 10 feet high, also maiden-hair ferns and clumps of wild *Lusiandra*, a sheet of cloudy mauve, and I felt that hidden away were many other treasures; but the fear of crocodiles made me wary, forgetting that where trout abound there can be no crocodiles, the elevation being too high for a reptile that revels in tropical heat.

When Hubert had secured two fish, each weighing over three pounds and had lost a big one, which unfortunately went off with his best fly, we ate our lunch. Finding it was past two o'clock we arranged that I should start back accompanied by Mwangi. I made my way slowly uphill through the tangled forest, and on gaining the bamboo thicket I lay down in the shade of the immense trusses. In the stillness of the African jungle and, with Mwangi to guard me, I was soon asleep. Till you get acclimatized, it is hard work climbing at an altitude of 6,000 feet, and the noonday heat made it no easier.

Feeling refreshed after my short siesta, I once more continued my rather laborious, but very beautiful, journey. On arriving at the spot where we left the car, close to a circle of beehive huts enclosed in a high strong fence, I again stretch myself on the ground, in the shade of some banana trees, and watch the natives passing to and fro. These are the Kikuyu tribe to which Mwangi belongs. The women, whose ears are thickly looped with pink bead bangles, carry their heavy loads on their backs, the burden being held in position by a strap passing round the forehead. Two old cronies meet to have a gossip; bent nearly double, and seemingly unconscious of their weighty

burden of firewood, they smile and chat away for fully ten minutes, nodding their old heads, and I idly wonder what the Kikuyu youths and maidens can have been doing to afford these ancient beldames such a topic of interest.

All loads, light or heavy, babies or firewood, are placed by the Akikuyu between their shoulders, and slung from the forehead. Occasionally they shift the weight and ease their heads by interlocking the fingers of the two hands over the nape of the neck. The women of their own accord will make up their load of firewood to 100 pounds, and more, and carry it to the homestead often many miles distant.

Small naked children peered at me solemnly from behind the bushes—they are not worried by clothes or lessons, and play happily in the sunshine, the little girls plaiting their straws into mats and baskets—the boys tending the flocks of goats and cattle. They often, in imitation of their fathers, carry bows and arrows of diminutive size, which no doubt gives them a feeling of importance, though I fear these weapons would not avail them in the event of their flocks being attacked by lion or leopard.

These small Totos are very placid and well behaved and appear to take life seriously from its very beginning, when they first make acquaintance with the world from the view-point of their mother's backs—you never hear a cry escape from the black babies, nor a merry shout from the youngsters at play, and this quiet apathy of childhood is in singular contrast to the vitality displayed in later life, when dancing or lion- or leopard-hunting; in the latter sport the courage and agility shown is amazing.

Eventually Hubert joined me just as the sun was

A FISHING EXPEDITION

setting ; he had secured two more fish and was very pleased with his day's sport. The flesh of the brown trout that we ate for dinner was a deep pink in colour and tasted delicious.

PART II

MERU—TANA RIVER FALLS—WAKAMBA—DONYA
SABUK—LIONS

VIII

THE ROAD TO MERU

WE are now on our way to Meru. We can see the Aberdare Mountains, and on our right, its snowy peaks glistening in the sun, is Mount Kenya, striding the Equator, round whose massive base we are travelling.

Less than thirty years ago there was no recognized road to Meru. The only possible paths to follow were the elephant tracks; ground beaten smooth and flat by their large soft-padded feet, all branches and overgrowth removed by their trunks, for the elephant is always feeding. Their trails weave and wind through the twilight shade of the forest, a labyrinth of tortuous paths that criss-cross the jungle through solid green walls of vegetation, matted and strangled with blackberries and thorny bushes and intersected with streams. Most of these tracks are centuries old, particularly those leading to water-holes, and as they are wide enough to accommodate their huge bulk, there is often ample room for a motor-car to travel on them. Elephants possess an instinctive knowledge for the easiest gradients in the hills, and the elephant road would be a pleasant one to follow if one felt more sure that they did not resent the human intrusion of their sanctuary.

Our road lay on the outskirts of the forest. The

open veldt with its great stretches of yellow, sun-baked grass and park-like open country lay before us, and here roamed the many antelope, the eland, the oryx, as this place was their happy hunting-ground.

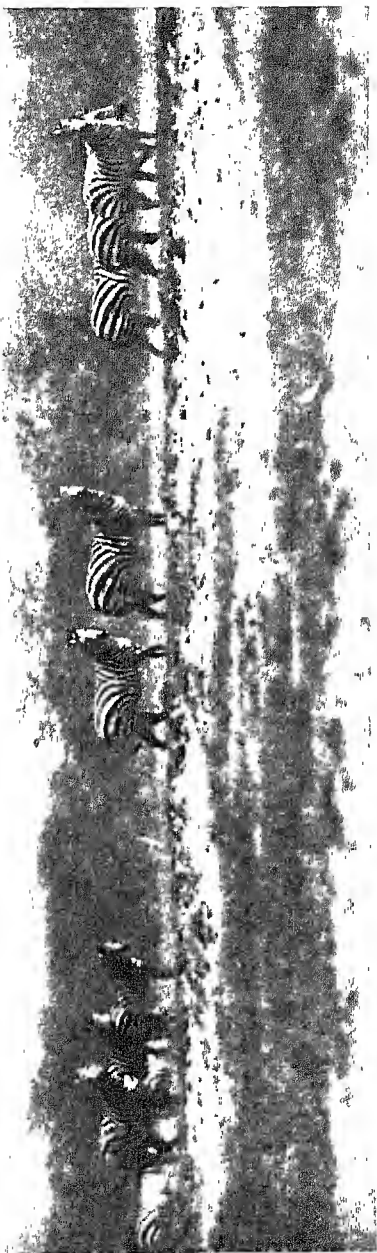
During three hours' travelling through the lonely land, the only living thing we encountered were large herds of zebra and once a few hartebeest, but when darkness falls, the wild life awakes and, savage and relentless, the red terror stalks its prey. The silence is broken by the snarl of hyena, the growl of lion, the rush of the hunter and the shriek of the hunted, for in the night comes to life the cruelty and fierceness of Africa's wild children seeking their prey.

A solitary building half hidden by gum and wattle trees loomed suddenly to our right; a small hotel with a notice-board bearing the quaint inscription: "We are situated precisely on the Equator."

Some weeks later when I had occasion to stay there, I discovered it belonged to an ex-naval officer and his wife, who run it most comfortably.

Shortly afterwards we arrived at Nanyuki, a long wide street cutting through the wooded country. Here we obtained petrol at an Indian *douka* (general store). At the end of the street was another little hotel, "The Sportsman's Arms," kept by a widow and her daughter. Nanyuki is the headquarters of many a game-hunter, for the lower slopes of the Mountain provide splendid sport. Elephant, rhino, oryx and various antelope, pushed back from the coffee and sisal shambas in the south, have found refuge in these forests and plains.

Leaving Nanyuki and its woods behind, we entered



ZEBRAS WATCHING OUR CAR

CIRCLING KENYA MOUNTAIN

"No Man's Land" and, always climbing, we reached a great desolate plain of yellowing grass in which grew tall mulleins. The few trees to be seen were mostly dead, evidently destroyed by fire. Beneath us on our left, deep valleys, blackened by fire, stretched away to the west, where the bleak hills of the Matthew Range broke the horizon. We were circling the base of Kenya and always climbing.

For some hours the Mountain had been obscured by mist, but as we emerged from a steep gorge it once again towered above us, each peak caught in the sun-rays . . . when all the land is dark the sun still lingers on its snows.

On leaving that gorge the landscape changed completely; the hills were green, and we travelled through woods where grew splendid cedars, the Poda tree (a sort of juniper), the *Pipdadinia Buchanani*, whose feathery foliage of emerald green made vivid contrast with the dark beauty of the *Trichilia emetica*.

In this happy valley, watered by rain brought by proximity of forest and mountain, were low undulating hills, rich in vegetation. A white board on which was written "To Southey's Farm" appeared on the right of the road, and great fields of wheat stretched away to lose themselves in the hills. We could not see the Englishman's house, but I tried to visualize the view from that lone homestead perched 8,000 feet up on the slope of Kenya, looking over the vast plateau beneath, and out to the Jombeni hills and the mountains that keep guard on the Northern Frontier. Would one suffer from living on that high altitude? Perhaps suffer in body and spirit when always contemplating those vast solitudes over which broods the haunting menace of Africa.

The road now started a long descent which has earned it the title of Punishment Hill, for not only is it very steep, but there are several hairpin corners to negotiate.

For several miles we carefully made our way down the long dangerous incline. The country was lovely, the ground carpeted with tall clumps of flowers rather like deep-blue forget-me-nots, and bushes of giant heliotrope were a mass of misty mauve. These great heliotrope flowers, often a foot across, are much appreciated by the bees, but the honey is too fiercely flavoured for the human palate, burning like mustard. The hill ended when we entered the Meru forest, which is justly considered one of the most beautiful in the land ; it is of enormous extent, but broken by many green glades sparsely wooded with acacias.

From the trunks of mighty trees hung trailing wreaths of vines and parasitic growths, that only enhanced their loveliness. Here and there the African thorn tree, shaped like an enormous umbrella, spread itself, often smothered in white blossom, and the tall Poda, the juniper of the tropics, towered black into the sky. In this untamed country one is struck by the boundless vigour, the restless energy of the wild life, the exuberant growth of vine and foliage in the forests—everywhere is an amazing vitality.

One has a feeling that everything in the land is immense and savage—the animals, the fish, the trees whose height would dwarf the tallest trees in Europe ; even the nettles' sting is fierce and if not attended to will fester badly.

Alan Tarlton, the white hunter, told me that once when he was on safari his party had to hurry out of the way of a rogue elephant ; one of the natives in

his blind terror flung himself into a bed of nettles. Once there, it was impossible for the wretched man to move, and the nettles had to be cut down before he could be rescued. Alan Tarlton sent back to the lorry for a blanket soaked in oil to wrap round the sufferer before they lifted him. They wasted no time in rushing him back to hospital, where he lay for some weeks hovering between life and death, while the whole of his skin peeled off. His sufferings must have been terrible, as he lay soaked in oil, a raw mass of humanity, and only a native could have survived the ordeal.

The trees and vegetation had been cleared away some 50 yards each side of the road, probably to prevent the traveller being surprised by a denizen of the forest, for rinderpest has broken out and its ravages make the buffalo more dangerous than ever; an animal will attack unexpectedly and without provocation before the disease lays him low.

The only forest folk we met were a troop of baboons who did not trouble to move at the sight of our car. They do great mischief to the crops, but are not considered dangerous unless one encounters a solitary old beast, who, soured by age, would not be averse to attacking a child, or even a grown woman, for the years add to their cruelty and cunning, and they differentiate between the sexes and have a wholesome dread of a man.

Before leaving the cool shade of the wood I made my first acquaintance with a Vavirunda crane; there were several of them standing near a small crater lake. They are magnificent birds with black and white plumage, and a crest of yellow feathers adorns their heads. In the mating season the gentleman dances

THE ROAD TO MERU

solemnly before his sweetheart, spreading his wings and twisting his neck, and it is pleasing to record that this absurd love-making is generally considered irresistible by the lady.

I was thankful when we entered an open undulating country, for as the brief twilight of the tropics darkened to night we turned on our headlights, and I knew from experience in a Scottish deer forest that the lamps have a fatal attraction for deer and probably also for buffalo and rhino.

On mentioning my fears to Hubert, he failed to raise my confidence when he related how one night a settler and his wife were motoring, not a hundred miles from here, when a buffalo charged the lights and landed on the car's bonnet, which crashed beneath his weight. The occupants were flung out on the road and lay at the mercy of the most dangerous beast in creation. Luckily the buffalo must have been dazed with the shock, and possibly scalded by boiling water, for he disappeared into the blue. When his unfortunate victims managed to muster sufficient courage to dare move to raise themselves, there was no sign of the brute and they found that they had escaped with nothing worse than bruises. But they had some miles yet to walk to reach their farm, and every step must have been a nightmare, haunted by the terror that at any moment the enraged buffalo might return to the attack.

No such adventure befell us and we peacefully arrived at Meru where the natives cultivate a rich soil watered by three rivers. Here were great plantations of banana and maize looking most prosperous, and notwithstanding the drought their losses in cattle had been comparatively few.

THE FIG AND WHISTLE

As this is the headquarters of the District Commissioner, a Battalion of the King's African Rifles are posted here with some British officers. Charminglly situated on the side of the hill is also a small hotel, the "Pig and Whistle," which consists of a living-room and several huts all lit by electric light, the power for which is generated by water from the adjacent river. My hut contained two beds, a chest of drawers and a small dressing-room with a bath, which the natives filled with hot water when required. The hut was raised several feet from the ground, and when the bath required emptying, all that was necessary was to pull out the plug and the water ran beneath. It was all very comfortable, and besides the four huts there were some tents for the accommodation of any extra guests.

Mr. Davey prides himself on the fact that he has never turned a traveller away. At whatever time of day or night the weary wayfarer arrives, he will always find a meal and a bed. At Meru we got news of our safari, and learned that James and Toby, after sleeping here a night, had gone on to Tharaka and the Tana plains.

IX

MAGIC BLACK AND WHITE

EARLY next morning ere the sun rose, I stood at the open door of my hut and looked out on the beautiful Meru country. Situated on a green plateau, watered by three rivers, the Gazita, the Mara, and the Mutonga, it presented a wild and rugged vista of mountain, valley, and vast forests stretching into the blue distance. When faced with the limitless expanse and splendour of Africa, one has a feeling of human smallness, quite an inferiority complex. But when the magic of the dawn, the delicate orange and green of the eastern horizon gives place to the glory of the sun, and the cool invigorating air greets you with countless aromatic perfumes, you realize how good it is to be alive.

It was a pioneer named Horn who in 1908 founded this station which stands some 5,400 feet above sea-level and where malaria and the mosquito are unknown. Alone he came to the district and established himself among the wild unfriendly tribes, managing by his sheer personality to pacify them and even to form friendships with the chiefs. They assisted him to build his house, plant a garden, and even to make a golf course, but as golf remained a mystery to them, he must often have played with Bogey for partner. He was given the title of District

SPIRITS OF THE MOUNTAIN

Commissioner, and when the time arrived for him to leave he handed over to his successor one of the most orderly districts in the colony.

A few years later Short Horn, the nickname by which he was generally known, on account of his short stature, entered the holy estate of matrimony. The ceremony, complete with the bride and her bridesmaid, the best man, the parson and a champagne reception, took place at MKuyu, in a very primitive church built of sisal poles with a grass roof. Some years elapsed before the couple returned to England. When they applied for their passports, it was discovered that the church had never been licensed and they had to be re-married by the District Commissioner in Nairobi.

There is a small tribe, the Mwimbi, numbering some 15,000 people inhabiting the strip of country between the rivers Mara and Mutonga who believe that their god Ngai lives on the Mountain. He is unapproachable and they are averse to invading his sanctuary; they also fear the evil spirits, the Ngayas, that haunt the woods and streams. It is the old, old faith of a primitive people. . . . Pan in another guise.

All natives have a deep appreciation of spiritual influence in material matters, the good and evil powers underlying rivers, trees and rocks. Their lives are governed by strange sanctions and ceremonies which are unintelligible to us, but have for them a profound significance. We who have lost our sense of primary things by dissipation of value, in the rush of modern life, are farther from the heart of nature than these

simple savages who, notwithstanding their false gods and illusions, live closer to the heart of all things.

Can our civilization explain how the Witch Doctor's curse will kill a man some hundred miles away—will wither the maize-fields—will strike the cattle with disease?

Sometimes the brooding silence of the African night is broken by drums, whose insistent throb carries their measure across the deserts and through the far jungle swifter than telephone in Europe. The message reaches to the forests where the white man's law has failed to penetrate; the law decreed by well-meaning legislators living in the amenities of another continent; secure in their civilization; ignorant of the powers of evil, the gods of the jungle; firm in their belief that witchcraft, cannibalism, and the voodoo ritual are obscene things of the past.

The lovely island of Pemba, often described as one of the world's beauty spots, has also a sinister reputation as a breeding-place of witchcraft, and the wizards and witches are credited with the power of being able to keep leopards under control and to send them at will to work mischief. Mr. Ingram, in his very interesting book on Zanzibar, relates how a leopard made its appearance in his district and in a few nights accounted for eighteen goats, so he sat up all night in a tree over a kill. The leopard did not put in an appearance and the natives said that it had been tamed by a Witch Doctor and would only go where bidden by him.

A doctor in Nairobi told Mr. Ingram of a man who came one day and complained that he had had witchcraft put on him, and that he would die on a certain night at 2 a.m. The doctor examined him and found

him perfectly fit and well. Nevertheless, as the time approached, the man grew weaker and weaker, though for no apparent reason. On the day in question the sufferer was so bad that he and another doctor put him to bed and asked the name of the wizard. It was a witch, and having brought her there to the dying man, they told her to remove the curse. She refused, so they tied a rope round her neck, and, throwing one end over a tree, pulled on it. When the old lady's toes were off the ground, she signified her willingness to remove the curse. As the fatal hour of 2 a.m. was approaching, she was hurried in and promptly made some passes over the man who was really at the point of death. However, he got up after this and walked away as well as he had ever been.

Mr. Ingram also describes a witch dance which he was taken to see, disguised as an Arab. The Witch Doctors were going to dance in order to cause the death of a man who refused to pay them a sum of money.

While proceeding in the direction where the performance was to take place, Mr. Ingram saw ahead of him a pale-blue light go vertically up in the air, then burst and fade away in silence. Shortly after he heard a weird calling and the hooting of owls. He and his guide came to a lonely grove of mango and cotton trees, where about a dozen young men and women dressed in black were following each other round the trees, slapping their bare arms and occasionally barking and hooting in a peculiar way.

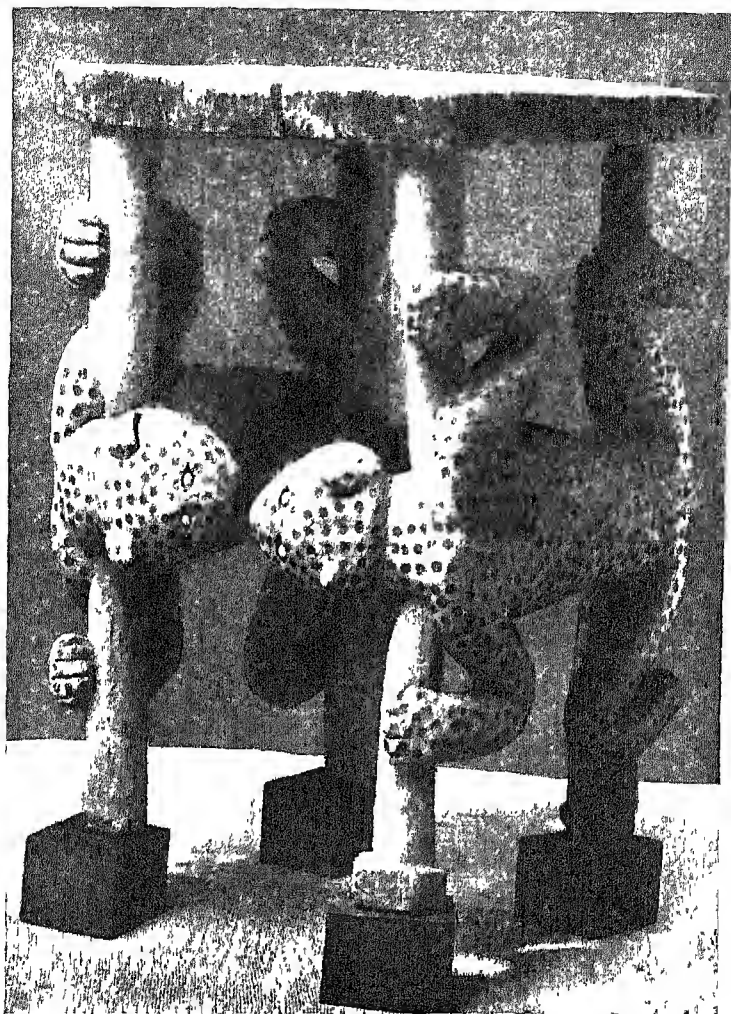
Not only did the barking and hooting come from the procession, but every now and then it would be from the trees; forms would drop with a rustle through the leaves and join in the procession, darting

about among the trees. After watching for an hour, the procession moved away, while in the distance could be heard the dreadful clapping and hooting. . . . It is said that the victim became a very sick man, and paid up to save his life.

In London, I lately saw a sacrificial table for sale, a heavy table supported by leopards carved in wood and grotesquely painted; I wondered what the gay crowds that thronged Sotheby's that morning would think if they knew the horror that table stood for; the human sacrifices that had been held on it, accompanied by unimagined cruelty and the loathsome rites of the Leopard Cult.

Far across the great African Continent there still exists the terrible Leopard Brethren . . . the most feared and powerful exponents of black magic in all the world. The high-priest can call for his human prey, by obtaining some intimate possession, like a few hairs of his head, a tooth, the parings of a nail, and the selected man answers to the mysterious summons. He may be a thousand miles away; sorcery pays no heed to distance. He casts aside his spear, the sign of his manhood; and with eyes fixed as if in introspection, the victim walks like a sleep-walker across the deserts, through the forests, to his doom. The wild beasts slink away from him as from something unclean; and with that terrible fixed stare and his arms held stiffly to his sides he arrives, possibly after many months, at the clearing in the forest from whence came the summons.

None but the initiated have witnessed the actual sacrifice, though some natives have seen the Leopard men, row upon row of warriors standing in a circle, clad in black and yellow cloaks; and the Witch



A LEOPARD TABLE *[By permission of Mr Davies.]*

Doctors in great leopard skins with the tail part between their legs, and the head pulled up to meet the masks over their faces, that are smeared in red ochre and white ash. Their mouths are fitted with the teeth of hyenas and their hands have gloves, each finger of which is tipped with a small sharp knife.

There are fires round the Place of Sacrifice, whose smoke hides the foul deed, and the beating of the drums smothers the screams—but one man saw what the magic wrought, and lived to tell of it; saw a strange shape rising from the human blood, and a wraith-like face swirling in the fumes . . . a form of materialization was taking place, and above the beating of the drums, the terrible chanting that had reached a frenzied howl was heard a blood-curdling shriek . . . the ghost suddenly jibbered and screamed and cursed.

The man who saw this . . . fled many miles. . . . He put a continent between himself and the human devils.

It is almost impossible to explain away the manifestation of some things :

Who asks doth err, who answers errs, say nought.
The Hindoo Vedas.

X

THE JOMBENI HILLS

WHILE the air was yet cool, Hubert and I started for the Jombeni hills. I was looking forward to this drive in pleasurable excitement, as Hubert considered the climb through the forest to the view at the summit perhaps the most beautiful in all Kenya.

Most of the Meru ladies we met were clothed in a ragged brown skirt, many blue necklaces, brass wire, and a smile. Some of the belles had large brass discs covering their breasts to which the lobes of their ears were attached. Like most native races they carried their babies slung on their backs, leaving their arms free, and the babies were generally smiling, while their little black naked heads wobbled in the blazing sun close behind the smooth-plucked heads of their mothers.

Many of the dusky damsels had their ear-lobes that hung down each side of their faces in long serpentine rings so well stretched that they could meet at the top of their shining pates; this is the last word in African chic. The lobe is pierced and the hole made is steadily enlarged by the insertion of blocks of wood, until a rent is made that will admit all the fingers of one hand. They fill the horrible cavity with any glittering toy that takes their fancy . . . an old medicine bottle, or an empty cigarette-tin will

equally serve. Nothing comes amiss. They also twist brass or copper wire round their arms and legs, while quite young, and this wire often gets deeply embedded in the flesh, apparently causing them no discomfort, though it looks very painful.

The brown skirts the Kikuyu and Meru women wear are made of goat skins which they chew up in their mouths to render them soft and pliable. This charming process makes their jaws so powerful that their bite is much feared by their husbands ; they can take off a nose or an ear with ease and neatness.

Some of the men fasten a goat skin or a piece of calico soaked in oil and red clay on their right shoulder, which, scarcely covering the upper portion of the body, is fastened underneath the left arm, falling to the knee. The oil and red clay combine to give the garment a rich orange colour which makes it exceedingly picturesque.

The men, who only don their fine feathered head-dress on festive occasions, often manage to attach a few feathers to their hair or to other odd places, and they also decorate their spears with a bunch. Many of them carry snuff-boxes, generally a lion's claw or a hippopotamus' tusk hollowed out and worn attached to a string round the neck ; a piece of leather is sewn over the open end and a neatly finished plug closes the small aperture through which the snuff is poured out. The snuff is made by grinding up the dried tobacco with pepper and powdered cow-dung and adding thereto a touch of grease, the result being very potent.

On arriving at the base of the Jombeni we started negotiating what appeared at first to be a formidable

THE JOMBENI HILLS

climb through the forest. However, the road was well engineered with easy gradients. It was here we first saw the Mukangaro, the rare and beautiful African walnut. These trees grow to an amazing height, with straight clean limbs and are free of the many parasitic growths usually found in the tropics. Some of them have attained a height of nearly 200 feet. This is the only forest in Kenya where these mighty giants are to be seen, and you may travel through all Africa and not find them again till you reach Nigeria, where I am told there is a fine collection of them on the slope of a mountain.

As we proceeded, the forest opened to disclose the wooded slopes beneath us, and plains and hills beyond. Then again we were shut in the thick tropical vegetation, an impenetrable green of giant bananas, tree ferns of surprising beauty often 30 feet high, and the many trees of Equatorial Africa to me unknown. Except for a brief glimpse of a troop of pretty little Colobus monkeys we saw no living thing, and the silence was impressive. Occasionally we passed great boulders of rock, and sometimes a stream crossed beneath the road. We could not see farther than a few yards into the impenetrable jungle, and knew not what eyes might be watching. It was an eerie feeling.

After climbing steadily for close on 3,000 feet, when our engine showed signs of boiling, we emerged from the dense vegetation into a palm wood which was comparatively open country, and here we saw signs of human habitation. The men did not let clothes worry them, but the ladies were smartly turned out in kilts of green banana leaves sticking out like a ballet dancer's, and necklaces and ear-rings of beads.

LOOKING ACROSS THE FRONTIER

From the height of the Jombeni we looked to the north on the vast plain stretching for 500 miles and more to the Abyssinian border. To the east were hills and forests where the jungle folk reign supreme, and to the west stretched great tracts of elephant country which I believe is a favourite breeding-ground of the cows. The large tuskers are to be found in the uninhabitable dense bush country between here and the coast.

The elephant lives his strange well-ordered life in these primeval forests, tearing the branches from the trees to eat their succulent foliage, bathing in the clear cool water of the crater lakes where once the lava boiled in the days of long ago. When he scents danger, he flaps his great ears and waves his slender trunk, for the senses of smell and hearing are acutely developed and his wisdom tells him not to rely on his feeble eyesight. When the rainy season arrives he descends to the open country, possibly to escape the drip, or more likely the incessant patter of the rain on the leaves, that tends to smother the sound of danger.

Descending the mountain we stopped to lunch by the banks of a little river beneath the shade of the great leaves of the wild banana, and the murmur of the stream was the only sound in the primeval forest. It was with a feeling of regret that I left this land of enchantment, knowing that it was extremely unlikely that I shall ever look on it again.

On our return to the hotel Hubert went off to fish the Gazita River a mile away, and I found a party of motorists in possession of the tea-rooms. Two large

THE JOMBENI HILLS

females in dusty velveteen trousers, which were not becoming to their shape, were strolling about the place with their hands in their pockets and cigarettes in their mouths. Many of the Kenya ladies wear trousers, and when they are slim and have them nicely cut in flannel, khaki, or some washing material, they can be very becoming ; but these two female elephants in their greasy, dusty attire, were not objects of beauty.

During the two days we spent at Meru there arrived a couple on safari, accompanied by a white hunter. Also a lady who told me she was the wife of the late Italian Consul in Nairobi, and that her husband had been called up to act as interpreter to the Italian troops who were threatening the Abyssinian Frontier, which threat the Abyssinians were apparently resenting ! The lady did not word it precisely as I have done ; she was loyal to her country and in explaining her view of the position mentioned that Italy wanted more colonies.

Apparently Africa seems to be attracting the attention of more than one European nation as an outlet for their so-called surplus population, and the cry for more colonies in this vast and attractive continent appears to be spreading.

The lady who had just arrived from Italian-Somaliland made light of the desperate journey she had endured. She had accompanied her husband from Nairobi to the Italian Somaliland Frontier to bid him farewell. As it was impossible for her to remain there, she was faced with an Indian lorry as the only possible means of return. In order to reach Meru, she had to cross the arid Liwan plains which extend for over 400 miles, and the wells had

run dry from the recent drought. The Indians, with their usual want of forethought, had only provided sufficient water for the journey, not allowing for unforeseen emergencies. On the third day the lorry completely broke down. They were still well over 100 miles from their goal; their water-supply and food was running out, and the prospect of obtaining help in this desolate waste was very remote.

Her dreadful position, the only white woman among the Indians, and the discomforts she must have endured, can be left to the imagination. When she was eventually found by a white hunter, she was lying by the side of the rough track almost unconscious. He placed her in his lorry and drove her with all speed to Meru, where she soon recovered.

Later when I took her to watch Hubert fishing, she made light of her dangerous experiences. It was only after her rescuer told me the tale, mentioning that he considered her the pluckiest woman he had ever come across, that I realised what a terrible ordeal she must have sustained.

Mr. Alan Tarlton, the white hunter, arrived before dinner, and I discussed with him the possibility of a safari to Marsabit, that lone mountain in the Kasut desert, guarding the northern frontier. Referring to the adventurous journey of the Italian lady, he told me that he had lately travelled through from Italian Somaliland, where he found the drought very acute. Owing to the lack of water at the wells, the Somali women were lying exhausted and dying on the route. A pathetic sight was to see many of them struggling on to the next well, always hoping to find water and oblivious of the fact that the babies on their backs had already succumbed.

THE JOMBENI HILLS

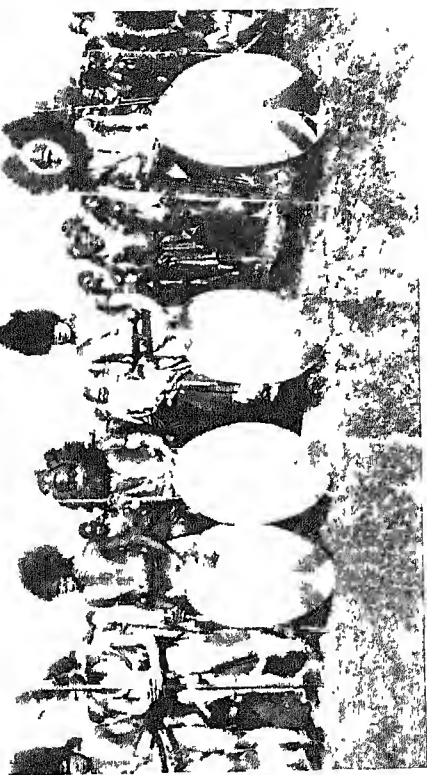
Mr. Davey joined in our conversation; he has himself been a game-hunter, and being of an observant nature he can tell many interesting facts about the country, the wild animals, and the natives, and after studying the elephant at close quarters, and recognizing its intelligence and, in his opinion, its vast superiority to other animals, nothing would induce him to kill one.

Before a man is granted the Government licence which makes him a White Hunter, he has to prove himself a person of integrity, experienced in bush-craft and big game. On him rests the responsibility of the health and care of a number of people, the entertainment of his clients and, above all, their personal safety. He is responsible for the observance of the Game Laws, and it is a point of honour that no wounded animal is left to a lingering death or to be a danger to the community.

Hubert returned late that evening with five fish, the largest weighing over 6 pounds, a record for the river. He told me the big fish had not played at all. We ate it for dinner, but it was rather nasty and evidently out of condition.

Dancing is very popular among the African tribes—all manner of dancing, men alone, women alone, and on full-moon nights there is often mixed dancing.

While in Meru the latter was the only dance I was privileged to see. In an open space on the hill-side, flooded by the moonlight, the dancers stood in two circles, facing one another, the men outside, the girls within. The men placed their hands on the women's hips and the women on the men's shoulders, while



NATIVE DANCE AT MERU

DANCING

they swayed from side to side, resting on alternate feet. Now and then they jumped vertically, to be followed by a long jump laterally. The whole circle slowly rotated, while the women uttered their shrill treble lu-lu-lu in sequence and the men kept up a steady deep grunting that formed an effective bass. At times they advanced in slow undulating movements, then gradually gathering speed they jumped high, and making steps in the air they again touched the ground so lightly it was hardly perceptible. Their movements were so gay and wild that it was a pleasure to watch their agile grace, and the moonlight added to the fascination. There were no drums, but the wave of sound that rippled round the circle made a delightful accompaniment. At midnight the dance broke up and the dancers went home singing cheerfully.

When a girl marries, she ceases to take part in these mixed entertainments; she may only dance with her own sex, but so deeply embedded in their heart is the love of dancing that they make every possible occasion serve as a pretext to do so. On the eve of a family marriage, or if several of them have been engaged for the day in a common occupation, such as bringing in reeds or sugar cane, they often celebrate its completion by a dance and song.

While the people of other lands find many outlets for their enthusiasms and emotions, to the untutored African his only mode of self-expression is dancing. He has no literature, no drama, but he has one art that he has made peculiarly his own . . . dancing is the concentrated outcome of his emotional life.

XI

THE LITTLE-KNOWN LAND OF THE THARAKI

WHILE Hubert and I were exploring the Jom-beni hills and fishing the Meru rivers, James and Toby had taken the lorry, with tents, provisions and two natives, to prepare a camp at the Tana River Falls, about 60 miles south-east of Meru, in a country practically unknown. They expected to secure porters on reaching the Tharaki Reserve.

We were anxious to see these Falls, and also try for the Rhino fish which we imagined must be in large quantities below the rapids, as no one had ever fished there, and very few had even seen the Falls. The first part of the way being through the elephant country, they carried a heavy rifle for protection; we had been told there was a road of sorts for 45 miles through country stiff with elephant, and as these had been damaging some native plantations cheap licences had been issued, several elephants had been shot and there was a special danger from the wounded ones that were known to be about.

Having given our safari two days to find the Falls and establish the camp, we started off to follow. It was a most glorious dawn—the sky a vivid orange beneath a bank of dark cloud. The first few miles was on the road to Embu, continually crossing rivers

and deep ravines thick with vegetation. Turning left from the high road we made a long descent to the plain, broken by steep wooded hills that stretched away to where we hoped to find the Tana River. The road led us through an extraordinarily rich country where the tall maize and banana trees were shady thickets, interspersed by forest trees and giant heliotrope bushes, often 20 feet high, one mass of mauve blossom. Along the side of the road grew pink mallow. The Meru tribe are indeed lucky to own this fine Reserve watered by innumerable rivers and streams.

Kenya revealed itself in naked glory from a new angle; we now viewed the mountain from the east. Our road degenerated into a rough path, and eventually stopped at the foot of a steep hill, where a few natives were squatting under an enormous baobab tree, whose trunk must have been at least ten times as thick as the largest English oak. Here we found the inevitable Indian Douka selling its bright handkerchiefs and trivial ornaments, beads of many colours and gaudy wares to tempt the native heart. The Indian is prepared to live on next to nothing, and make a small profit on these cheap wares. Any profit that accrues is sent straight to Bombay, and many Indians have waxed rich in the more populous districts; but the money does not circulate in the colony, and constitutes a constant drain on its resources. The Englishman endeavours to make money by developing the resources of the country, but the Indians' wish is to drain it of whatever wealth exists. It is unfortunate that many of the Indians who came to Kenya were drawn from the most undesirable class in India. Their style of living is on a very low scale, which makes them unfair competitors.

They are prepared to sell at prices that kill competition, while recouping themselves in other ways not always legitimate. In their squalid surroundings, ignoring sanitary precautions, they are often a danger to the community. Typhoid, smallpox and the plague were unknown in East Africa before the Indian came. Their increasing numbers at one time constituted one of Kenya's serious problems, but since the world slump immigration has fallen off. Close to the baobab tree was also the Commissioner's hut, where he comes once a year to collect the Poll Tax of 12s. a hut levied on the native.

It was here we had expected a guide to take us to the camp, and also porters to carry our modest portmanteaux, mosquito-nets, fishing-rod, rifle and most precious bottles of drinking-water. We knew the others had passed that way, as their lorry stood empty in the shade of some trees. We tried to question the natives, but this tribe, the Tharaki, cannot understand Swahili. Mwangi came to the rescue, and we were given to understand that the Tana River Falls were three hours distant, which in native parlance might mean anything from 6 to 20 miles. Also that two white men and seventeen porters had passed there two days before.

It was now 8 a.m. and already hot; we had come down over 3,000 feet and were probably about 2,500 feet above sea-level. There was no sign of our guide, which rather perturbed us. James had promised to send one, and as he is very punctilious in keeping his word we concluded the man had probably dawdled on the way. These savages do not let small matters such as punctuality disturb them; time to them is an unknown quantity.



A YOUNG THARAKI

AN EXHAUSTING WALK

When a young Tharaki came forward and offered to take us to the Tana River Falls we cheerfully accepted, being anxious to start our long walk before the great heat. There appeared only one path to follow, and we still hoped to meet James's envoy.

Leaving our luggage in charge of Mwangi to follow later, we trudged along a rough track through a tangle of shrub, varied by trees and rocks, while on our left rose a steep hill. The Dom palms were of immense height, and bore clusters of red fruit, and the birds were singing a pæon of joy to the young day. Those who imagine that the gay-plumaged birds of the tropics have no song should come to the forests of Kenya, where at sunrise and sunset they would hear the glorious music of their voices, and in surroundings unsurpassed for grandeur.

After walking some five miles we met a youth who gave us to understand that he was sent by James, and that we were already half-way to the camp. He helped our porter carry the rod and water-bottles, we having left the heavy rifle in the car with our luggage on being assured that there was no game to fear. We had now descended another 500 feet. It was nearly ten o'clock, and the heat was trying, but so far we had refrained from drinking. Occasionally our way lay through the dry bed of a river, and the deep sand made walking difficult. The only living things we encountered were some baboons.

We plodded on for another hour, always up and down sharp escarpments, but always descending towards the plain through which the Tana River makes its way for 700 miles, from its birth in Kenya Mountain to the Indian Ocean. As long as we skirted the hill we were in the comparative shade of the trees,

but by eleven o'clock, when we reached the plain, the sun was overpowering, the ground burnt hot on the soles of my feet, and I found my thin crêpe-soled shoes were useless as a protection. For over an hour we trudged that arid desert studded with thorny scrub that gave no shade. We were now drinking from the water-bottles every few minutes ; our mouths were parched, our lips were cracked ; the more we drank, the drier seemed our throats, and only the thought of the camp kept me going. After passing a cluster of huts we suddenly got a view of the Tana River a few hundred yards away, but no sign of the Falls. In that evil moment we realized there was some dreadful mistake and that neither of the men knew the whereabouts of the camp.

We walked down to the river-bank to question a native, who said that our safari had been on this spot the day before ; that the white men had taken a canoe downstream to the Falls some three hours distant, while the porters had carried the luggage through the bush. The idea of walking for another three hours on that hot plain was beyond me, so we sat in the shade of a Dom palm while a messenger went down the river to fetch another canoe, but this day was doomed to be a series of disasters. After some time, while we sat sipping the Tana water with which we had refilled our bottles, our messenger returned to say that there was a hole in the canoe which they were now mending, and asked us to walk to it. With difficulty I put on my shoes, and we trudged another couple of miles to a cluster of palms on the bank of the river, which afforded a little shade. Here we found the canoe, which was nothing but a dug-out and full of holes which the natives were filling

up with bits of rag. It was a terribly small craft to venture on a river infested with hippo and crocodiles, and nothing but the impossibility of walking on my blistered feet drove us to the desperate course of risking our lives in it. Here the river was about 150 yards wide, and in places very shallow. The banks were studded with Dom palm and a few thorn trees. We did not feel happier when we saw a large crocodile on the opposite bank heave itself into the water.

Once more I removed my shoes, trusting that I would not have to put them on again, and Hubert and I sat and watched the boat being made watertight, while we never ceased drinking the warm Tana water. We were beyond caring what germs we were imbibing! I think the pain of my parched throat, cracked lips and swollen tongue was even more unbearable than my blistered feet. The natives now turned the canoe the right way up, and, though it was evidently still leaking, we entered it, hoping for the best. There we solemnly sat, while the natives stared at us, making no attempt to get in, and after a few minutes, when the water reached our knees, we realized that it was considered too dangerous, and out we came again. It was now four o'clock, and we were absolutely desperate. Hubert, whose feet encased in thicker shoes had not suffered like mine, offered to walk on and try to find the camp, but we knew that even with luck it would be dark before he reached it, and I refused to remain alone in the bush for the night, with the chance of being devoured by a leopard, or the alternative of retiring into one of the huts we had passed earlier in the day, where the insects and the smell of hot bodies soaked in castor oil would have been intolerable.

LAND OF THE THARAKI

Food we had none, but that did not worry us, as we were both incapable of swallowing anything that was not liquid. Seeing Hubert's anxiety I again made an effort to walk. One of the natives had left us, but we insisted on the other one remaining to carry our water-bottles and rod. As the Tana wound zig-zagging through the plain, we reluctantly left its banks to cut our way across, for we were anxious to keep the river in view, hoping to see the other canoe. We felt sure that James and Toby must be searching for us.

After another mile of that scorching plain, the river again came in sight ; by now the agony of my feet made it impossible to continue, and we threw ourselves down in the welcome shade of a large fig tree beside the river. The outlook was indeed black, when a native moving along the bank informed us that a canoe with two white men had just passed that spot on their way up the river, evidently looking for us. We hurriedly sent him back to intercept the boat which could only make slow progress against the current, and Hubert climbed up a bank to watch events.

I think I must have slept a while, for when I roused myself it was to wonder where I was, till my agonizing thirst brought me to full consciousness. I lay quiet, and every now and then I heard a splash in the water. Looking up through the leafy branches I detected some monkeys amusing themselves chucking the unripe figs into the river. They paid no attention to me, but when Hubert returned to tell me the boat was in sight there was a noisy scramble, and forsaking the fig tree they flung themselves into the Dom palm some yards away. They were the green spider

monkeys that inhabit this region, and with their immensely long arms and legs and tiny bodies they resemble spiders as they hurl themselves from branch to branch.

No words could describe our feelings of relief when we saw the canoe and the anxious faces of James and Toby, who had realized that their messengers must have failed and had been frantically searching the river-bank to find us. Our progress in the canoe was slow, as we drifted down with the current, a tall Tharaki, completely naked, propelling the boat with a podo, a pole cut from the main rib of a palm frond. The Tharaki carried several poles of varying lengths, the longest being about 15 feet, and he used them with great skill in the rapids. At times we grounded in the shallows of the river, when James and Toby jumped out to push our dug-out off the sand-bank. This proceeding terrified me, knowing the Tana River was infested with crocodiles. Now and then a crocodile's head appeared in the water, and twice some hippo rose so close beside us I feared they would overturn our little craft.

After another two hours, the river altered in appearance, great rocks showed themselves, and the waters looked troubled, while we could hear the thunder of the Falls. We landed on the left bank, and after scrambling up a steep ascent, and a short walk, we found our camp. We were so thankful to rest, to drink something that was not Tana water, and to know that no further effort was required, that we did not worry much about our luggage. We knew it to be still in the car, guarded by Mwangi, but beyond hope of recovery at such a distance, with night setting in. However, James thought other-

LAND OF THE THARAKI

wise, for our precious mosquito-nets were left behind, and the menace of malaria and blackwater fever is very real in this land. Wasting no time, he started off to retrieve our belongings, accompanied by six of the porters, and it was only later in the evening that we found out that he had not tasted food since breakfast. We calculated that if they cut across to the hills the way we should have come, they would shorten the journey by many miles. It was nearly six o'clock when they left the camp, and they could only count on half an hour of daylight to find the path.

In the meantime we made ourselves as clean and comfortable as circumstances permitted, and when I had bathed and bandaged my feet I hobbled along with Hubert and Toby to look at the Falls whose thundering waters were deafening our ears. Here the river made a sharp bend. Close to where our camp stood its waters hurled themselves in three separate waterfalls through the rocks into an abyss about 100 feet beneath, swirling the tawny mass of angry foam in a sort of blind fury that was indeed awe-inspiring. We stood near the edge of the plateau on which our camp was perched, and looked across at the turbulent flood pouring its volume of water into the seething depths below.

In the twilight that precedes the tropical night, one felt the relentless cruelty of Africa embodied in this river . . . one heard savage voices in the thunder of the Falls . . . as the stars appeared I gladly turned away to seek the shelter of the tent.

XII

THE TANA RIVER FALLS

WE sat on two camp-beds to eat our dinner and debated how to arrange for the night. By no miracle could our luggage arrive till next morning. Hubert insisted that Toby and I should occupy the two camp-beds, with the mosquito-nets slung over them tied to the tent roof, while he slept on the floor, with a blanket between him and the hard earth. He placed the loaded rifle ready to hand, and a lamp beyond his head hoping to lure the mosquitoes away from himself. Tired as we were, we none of us slept much. It was very hot. During the night I heard the cook enter and curl himself up beside us. He had let out the fire and probably feared a prowling leopard.

At daybreak, when the others rose, I found I could not put my feet to the ground, so remained on the bed for breakfast, miserably afraid that I should not be able to walk again for some days.

Hubert and Toby went off to find a bathing-place safe from crocodiles, and half a mile from the camp they discovered that beautiful little river, the Gazita, that we had fished at Meru gaily making its way through the forest to join the Tana below; its cool waters that had but lately descended from the mountain glacier were not appreciated by crocodiles, and

THE TANA RIVER FALLS

made a safe bathing-place. While they were enjoying a swim, I found it quite amusing to watch the natives who passed the camp on the way to fetch water from the river. The men were splendidly tall and well proportioned. They wore the minimum of clothes, often a silver anklet or a heavy silver ring round their necks, and strange-looking silver earrings completed their toilet. The women had most fascinating spats of leather, thickly sewn with beads on their slender ankles ; a leather skirt, which was only a frill, about three inches deep, heavily worked with beads and cowrie shells, was the usual attire of these attractive little ladies, and both men and women were continually inhaling tobacco from their weird snuff-boxes. I was impressed by their air of aloofness as they passed my tent ; they evidently had no use for the white people.

When I was beginning to worry at the non-arrival of James and the porters, a commotion outside told me that they had returned. It was a very exhausted and dilapidated James who entered the tent with my portmanteau, and we quickly ordered food and drink. While I unpacked some healing plasters for my feet, he, in the intervals of eating and more especially drinking, told me of his adventurous night.

After crossing the plain, they had lost themselves in the wooded slopes, where they wandered for some hours unsure of their direction. He had the misfortune to break his electric torch early in the evening, and could only use his compass. When the day broke they found themselves at the Commissioner's hut on the edge of the forest.

One felt they had indeed been lucky to escape

JAMES RETRIEVES OUR BELONGINGS

the attentions of the wild animals, for though the game have deserted this country there are many prowling leopards and James had left his rifle with us.

After snatching a couple of hours' sleep, but without waiting for food, James had retrieved Mwangi and our belongings from the car and returned to camp with the weary and disgruntled porters.

While James was breaking his long fast, the other two appeared with a Catfish, which is excellent eating, and was promptly given the cook for our luncheon; they had failed to hook a Rhino fish, nor had they even seen one. We all slept through the early afternoon, when the heat blistered the air. After the three of them left to again try their luck at the fishing, I found to my relief that thrusting my bandaged feet into my canvas shoes I could walk quite comfortably. Indeed, the only thing that still pained me were my cracked lips. Even "inotyol," that wonderful ointment that had cured my feet could not work the miracle, and I did not smoke or touch anything hot for many days.

Before the sun went down, Toby returned to tell me the fishing was a complete failure, and we went for a walk beside the Gazita River. It was very beautiful, with its banks of great Borassus palms and wild bananas, besides many flowering trees, in which monkeys were swinging, and was indeed a contrast to the grim Tana, with its cruel-looking waters and barren banks where alone a few Dom palms survived. When a long orange snake thrust a black head out of some grass we retreated to our camp.

James came into the tent very excited over a white

THE TANA RIVER FALLS

creeper he had discovered growing on a rock in the Tana River, whose waters boiled and seethed around, making it quite impossible for anyone to reach it. I followed him to where it grew, but we could not approach to within fifty yards. How strange to see that frail cluster of loveliness flinging its delicate blossom over the cruel rocks; its delicious waxy flowers sprayed with the yellow foam of that sinister river, the Tana. Nothing could ever touch those flowers save the rain, the wind, the foam and possibly a butterfly . . . they grew there inviolate from human hands.

As I was now quite recovered and the fishing had proved disappointing, we decided it was time to return to a normal life. On the following day two of the porters were deputed to accompany Toby and me to the Commissioner's hut where the cars awaited us. We were to make a very early start while Hubert and James waited to see everything packed and in order before following.

That night James slept on the ground beneath a thorn tree with his mosquito-net hanging from the branches and over a dozen beer-bottles full of Tana water neatly arranged beside him. He was still suffering from thirst and had told the servant to leave him out some water—the native had treated him generously!

Hubert again slept on the ground, but he was able to arrange a net over his head; he was also taking quinine. Before turning in, I went to have a last look at the Falls; they appeared even more menacing by starlight. Behind them a storm was gathering and the whole horizon was continually lit by lightning. Hubert thought it possible there was rain at Donya



HUBERT FISHING TANA RIVER FALLS

A LOVELY DRIVE

Sabuk. Everything was black to the south. Could the rain be coming at long last?

It was Hubert who roused us at break of day, and after a cup of tea Toby and I started on our tramp through plain and wood accompanied by two reliable guides.

In the cool of early morning I enjoyed the walk. We had left the plain before the sun rose, and once in the wood, though we had some steep climbing, it was never uncomfortably hot. Our guides carried two large water-bottles, but I warned Toby not to start drinking till he could no longer hold out. We found some rather bitter sort of plum on the ground, and as the natives were eating them we followed suit, and they did more to assuage our thirst than any amount of water. We arrived at the baobab tree just as the others caught us up. We had walked 10 miles in under four hours and climbed over a thousand feet. We had also emptied our water-bottles. Our safari was over and we packed ourselves, tent, rifles, rods and baggage into the motors facing for home. We had suffered tortures of thirst, and had failed to get the Rhino fish, but we had seen the Tana Falls, the Jombeni Hills, the lovely primeval forest, and above all, to live for ever in our memory, the stately peaks of Kenya.

Our drive to Embu and Fort Hall, where we again joined the road to Thika, was through magnificent scenery. The road wound its way round the great spurs of Mount Kenya, through gullies and deep ravines shaded by the forest trees, many of which were flowering. Beneath us on our left lay the

THE TANA RIVER FALLS

Tana Valley, and through the purple haze of heat we could faintly see the cone-shaped hills we had so lately left. To our right towered the snow peaks of Kenya, blue-white ice against a sapphire sky.

We lunched by a lovely stream, the Thurchi, and the water descending from the glacier snows was deliciously cold. When we arrived at Fort Hall we had done the complete circuit of the base of the mountain, a distance of 200 miles. On reaching Kianzabe, we found the lightning had not deceived us. Rain had fallen, barely an inch of thrice-blessed rain!

James and Toby in their safari lorry could not go the pace that Hubert went; it was nearly midnight when they arrived. They had one excitement on the road, when a leopard sprang out of the sisal shambas that lie between Thika and the Athi River, and crossing in front of them, the lorry, weighing a ton and a half, caught the brute a terrific blow. They felt the bump as the wheels went over the body, but as we had taken the rifles they did not dare stop to investigate, for a wounded leopard might prove a nasty customer. The next day there was no sign of the leopard, so he probably recovered.

XIII

THE WAKAMBA RESERVE

AS there was no further sign of rain, also no appearance of the many tropical ailments with which we were threatened after drinking the turgid waters of the Tana River, Hubert and I planned to visit the Wakamba country, on whose outskirts is situated the Kianzabe estate.

Toby had gone on safari with Alan Tarlton, armed with the Mawser rifle and his camera, hoping to obtain antelope, leopard and possibly a buffalo. Lions there are in plenty, but Tarlton does not allow them to be shot, and this game reserve, only a few miles from Nairobi, is his private property. He has promised me to be close beside Toby with his powerful rifle when they are stalking the larger beasts.

After passing through some coffee shambas where the few showers of rain had come too late and the leaves were still yellow and shrivelled, we entered the Wakamba Reserve. This tribe, before we took over the country, was much harassed by its powerful neighbours, the Masai, who regularly raided their cattle and incidentally massacred the owners, though the Wakamba would put up a good fight. It is only fair to add that the Masai never made war on the women. They and the children were inviolate and the

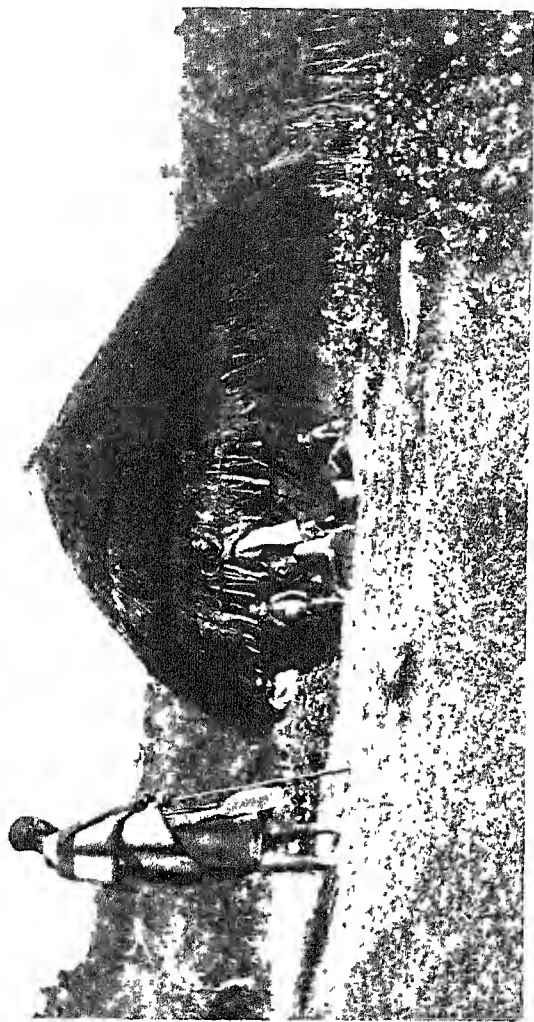
former would sometimes act as envoys to arrange terms between the combatants.

Now that the *razzia* is a thing of the past the tribe is rapidly increasing. Part of their reserve, which embraces the Matangulu Hills, was once a magnificent forest, but this forest they have utterly destroyed, ruthlessly cutting down great trees to feed their goats on the foliage and setting fire to the undergrowth, thinking to get feed for their cattle.

Here in his grass-roof hut, which he shares with the goats and calves, the native lives his simple life, cultivating, with the aid of his wives, his patches of maize and root crops. In the past all he knew of the outside world was the terror of the slave raiders and the menace of tribal enemies. In these days of ordered life, he often leaves his wives to carry on the small farm while he earns good money working for the Whitemen, and when the coffee berries are ripe the wives and children all come to help in the harvesting; these are great days, when even the *totos* add their mite to the family exchequer.

The tiny pot-bellied *totos*, generally stark-naked and saturated in castor oil, tend the herds of goat and cattle, and though the occasional whiff borne on the breeze is none too pleasant, it is nothing to the intolerable stench of their elders, who themselves and their garments are permeated with a mixture of oil and perspiration of many years' standing.

Villages, strictly speaking, are non-existent, but clusters of mushroom-like huts are sown all over the country, in some parts with extraordinary thickness, for every wife is entitled to her own hut. Many of the chiefs, who own twenty or even thirty wives, have their own spacious homesteads enclosed in two



WAKAMBA FAMILY LIFE

compounds, an outer and an inner one. The presence at night of the goats and calves in the homestead necessitates a regular sweeping out each morning, and as a rule the ground inside the enclosure is kept neat in a way that would shame the camping-ground of many Europeans.

A girl's betrothal is entirely her own affair. If she is bespoken as a child to an old or wealthy man, she is free to break off her engagement on reaching years of discretion, and there are no breach of promise cases ; but if the goats have been already paid, due restitution must be made. As finger-rings are not the fashion in Kenya, the young lady is given a collarette made of whipped copper wire, with a long pendant chain attached. It was a Kikuyu woman who volunteered the information, "We do not marry anyone we do not want to, and we like our husbands to have as many wives as possible."

The poverty-stricken condition of the "rich" white men in respect of wives aroused much interest and sympathy.

Polygamy is very general among the tribes and a rich man invariably possesses a large number of wives ; possibly the reason why polygamy is popular with the women is that it adds lustre to the establishment and tends to lighten the general work. The first wife is known as the Big Wife and she is always consulted in any matter of importance that concerns the household. Prostitution, under tribal conditions, was unknown until the advance of civilization, when there arose a tendency for the women to go to the towns. Also the adoption of more sophisticated ideas in the matter of clothing appears to go hand-in-hand with the breaking down of ideas of morality, and

THE WAKAMBA RESERVE

especially is this so among the women. When the native is made to feel ashamed of his nakedness he, like Adam before him, feels himself a bad man. He also loses his dignity. A native, dressed in mission clothes, resembles a monkey, and for many reasons the settlers prefer not to employ him.

On reaching the Matangulu Hills, we found there had been a plentiful rainfall, and the country was a refreshing green. The road wound ever higher over the hills and through a wealth of vegetation, while beneath us were smiling valleys, planted with the usual maize, millet and bananas, which, with the wild honey and sweet potato, is the staple food of the native population. In former days the Wakamba had the unenviable reputation of being the only cannibal tribe in Kenya, for which reason perhaps so many of the older generation have filed teeth.

High in the hills grew large thickets of gum trees and wattle, planted by the British Government in an endeavour to afforestate the land again. We could see these woods making dense green cover on the surrounding hills, and though most of them are only 10 to 15 years old they are already over 30 feet high and afford a pleasant shade.

We made a long descent into a more arid country, whose foothills were sparsely interspersed with scrub and thorn. Here a herd of gazelle, carrying fine horns, appeared almost white in the sunlight against the green background. They are known as Grant's gazelle and move in small groups, everlastingly switching their tails from side to side. A ram, with his three or four wives, is accompanied by his young family, while the bachelors of the party herd together till the time arrives for mating. A greater bustard

MANY ANTELOPE

slowly rose, and flapping his great wings soared into the blue ; while farther afield a drove of ostriches were disdainfully picking their way over the veldt.

We also saw two secretary-birds, who, with their three quills stuck like pens behind each ear, looked for all the world like eager clerks about to take notes ; true busybodies hopping round to exchange the news of the day with each other. The secretary-bird was once protected and officially pronounced sacred as a destroyer of snakes ; but in course of time he was discovered killing young game-birds, many more birds than reptiles. Now, shorn of his halo, he is no longer protected. He must take his chance with the rest of the bird creation.

We crossed a river now reduced to a trickle and journeyed on through a great plain, passing many herd of gazelle both Grant's and Tommies (Thompson's). The latter cannot boast of the length of their horns, but they have a smart black and white stripe painted on their flanks, and look dainty little animals flicking their small white tails continuously and ever on the alert, as are most of their kindred. A troop of clumsy-looking Gnu (wildebeest) galloped across our road, heads down, tails up, looking very comic but also bad tempered and ugly. In the distance they might easily be mistaken for buffalo.

We stopped the car and through our glasses we saw that stately beast, the eland, one of the largest of the antelopes. The sun flooded the plain with a golden glow, making the animals appear like phantom creatures in the red dust which floated in the air as they gambolled and galloped in the joy of freedom. But always their scouts were on guard, for eternal vigilance is the price of life for the antelope and his kind.

Those who have lived in this country and watched the wild animals in their natural surroundings take no pleasure in shooting them. It is only the stranger who comes out imbued with this lust for blood. True big-game hunting is a matter of a camera and involves more courage, patience and knowledge than does the firing of a rifle. Surely the length of a camera film showing wild life in the forest and plains is a more lasting joy than a few moth-eaten skins on the ground or horned heads on the wall.

We eventually came to a wide river of pure sand with a very steep descent. In order to lighten the car I got out, and Hubert rushed it down the hill, but he had not gone many yards when it stuck fast in the sand. It was an anxious moment, as we were in the heart of the Wakamba country, far from any help. Some totos were watching the fun and we despatched them to find their parents, Hubert speaking to them in his best Swahili and showing some coins, which had a good effect in hurrying them up. Three men were soon on the scene, who extricated the car and pushed it to the farther bank.

"All is well that ends well," and we started once more to drive to our objective, the MBooni Hills, but a seemingly endless country of scrub lay before us, varied by cruel-looking euphorbia and cactus.

Rain must have fallen lately as the grass was green and there were many herds of the native humped cattle feeding. The humps of the cattle, like the camels, support them in the days of famine; they draw on the fat when other rations fail. Presently we entered a stretch of stark aridity in which a few aloes made effort to survive, and it was in this seemingly waterless desert that we saw that perfect little antelope,

the Dikdik—a diminutive horned creature rather like a hare. They were most attractive beasts and appeared quite fearless.

We were now approaching the MBooni Hills, and started climbing a long ascent; crossing the bed of a rocky river by a rough bridge we entered the foothills, wooded in palms and euphorbia, where it was difficult to find a path, and the high bracken did not tend to make the task easier. One can fairly accurately tell the elevation of the country by its plant life. When you meet bracken you are 6,000 feet above sea-level and there is no fear of mosquito or malaria, and when you see the bamboo forests your altitude is probably at least 8,000 feet. I saw a garden in the Aberdares a few miles south of the Equator massed with daffodils and all the spring flowers of England.

We eventually struck the right road and climbed 3,000 feet through a veritable tangle of beauty. The road followed a mountain stream occasionally spanned by bridges, in whose little pools grew the beautiful blue African water-lily. This gorge was a garden of colour; the Nandi flame, with its large crimson blossoms, the golden Alamanda, the Jackarandi, still tipped with lovely flower, giant bamboos and every variety of fern, palm and orchid grew in wild luxuriance, while the stream splashed and foamed over the rocky boulders. For eight miles we steadily climbed the face of the mountain till we emerged on the very top, which was thickly planted with clumps of gum and wattle. Here we selected a shady spot where we could enjoy the view and at the same time eat our lunch. It was past two o'clock and we felt hungry and thirsty, but for a while we were lost to all but the splendour of the scenery. Beneath us

were ravines with murmuring streams, whose leafy banks were a tangle of green, whose deep pools were fringed with the wild asparagus fern. The lower hills, clothed in forest, stretched to the distant plains, where in lonely majesty rose Kenya, its great snow peaks white against the azure sky, while to the south, over a hundred miles away, towered Africa's mightiest mountain, Kilimanjaro, capped with eternal ice. Surely when contemplating beauty such as this, it is a prayer that our silence tenders, a prayer of praise and gratitude for the glory of it.

But inexorable time drew us back to the needs of the present, and after lunching we entered the car for the return journey and descended the mountain somewhat faster than we climbed it, to join the road at the junction of the dry, stony river. We now turned left-handed; our objective was to return through the Pass in the Mua Hills and across the eastern end of the great Athi plains.

A couple of hours brought us to the oasis of Machakos where dwells the District Commissioner. This was once the capital of the country and the busy centre of the slave trade, as it stood on the road to the coast. Close by is the post office, and next to it we stopped to feed the car, as our petrol was at a very low ebb and at one time we doubted whether we could carry on.

We now saw some coffee and orange groves, the first signs of European cultivation since early morning, but as we ascended the Mua Hills the groves were soon lost to sight in the interminable native Reserve of bananas and maize. Once more we were climbing. The Government roads are well graded, and on reaching the top of the Pass we stopped to drink the cold

tea we had brought with us, which by this time was warm, but very welcome ; then down into the great Athi plain, which was a short time ago the home of the rhino, the lion and indeed every species of game save the elephant. But this country is within easy reach of Nairobi and has suffered from the attention of many sportsmen. All we saw were a few hartebeest. The river Athi is a favourite with fishermen because of the mahseer, commonly known as the Rhino fish, which sometimes scales up to 50 pounds.

The Rhino fish lives in deep caves, under overhanging rocks, and fears to emerge into the open water as the crocodiles are always on the watch. One day Hubert swung his line, with its tempting bait, over a rock and let it drift under the ledge. The Rhino fish grabbed at the luscious morsel, and when he felt the hook he rushed out to rid himself of the cruel thing that held him fast. A crocodile at once gave chase, and the unhappy Rhino fish, maddened with fear, flung himself all over the pool, while Hubert shouted to James, who was fishing below, to reel up and come to the rescue. By dint of chucking stones at the crocodile he was eventually driven off, and shortly after Hubert landed the Rhino fish, which turned the scale at 36 pounds.

We were travelling on a rough track interspersed with dry water-courses, and to our horror we found one of them filled up with large loose stones that would have made an end of our poor car. It was a question of a detour of 40 miles or removing the stones ; so Hubert and I set to work to try and roll away the offending boulders. After a strenuous time we smoothed the way somehow, and Hubert started to negotiate the perilous path while I directed

THE WAKAMBA RESERVE

him, as it was getting dark. With some bumping the car got across, but the shackle bolt of one of the front springs snapped and we drove the rest of the way very slowly, feeling that every bump might let us down. We reached Kianzabe late that night, after nearly bumping into a hyena, which would have been quite the nastiest bump of all.

XIV

THE MOUNTAIN OF MIST

THE days go by in brilliant sunshine and we look in vain for the sight of a cloud, while the trees yellow and the coffee berries wither up. The wonderful crop that a short time ago promised a record season is already more than half destroyed.

Oh the tragedy of this land that offers so much but rarely fulfils its promise! When the rains are due they often fail or are so torrential that everything is swept away; the roads are impassable and the soil is lifted off the coffee trees, leaving the roots exposed. Added to this is the terrible menace of locusts. Truly the settler's life is a hard one; he requires much capital and an unfailing optimism to tide him over the many lean years.

Once the clouds gathered on the heights of Donya Sabuk, raising our hopes. I was longing to climb that mysterious mountain and get a glimpse of the buffalo that inhabit its forest. Though it is strictly preserved, some of the Wakamba have succeeded in penetrating to the forest where they lie in wait in the tree-tops till the animals are below them, when they shoot the poor beasts with poisoned arrows. Only the other day a rhino was found dying from a poisoned wound inflicted some weeks earlier, and the brute must have suffered tortures till a bullet put an end to

its agony. The natives know no mercy or sympathy for pain, whether among animals or humans. Fortunately twenty Wakamba have now been rounded up and I have no doubt been very severely dealt with.

It is not only natives who are guilty of poaching, but a month ago some English sportsmen (?), strangers to this country, managed to elude the watchers and shoot a buffalo. They got away with the head, and boasted of the feat!

Lady MacMillan had given me permission to visit her beautiful mountain and had most kindly arranged with her manager, Mr. Everard, that he should escort me. So one afternoon Hubert and I drove to his house which stands on a lower slope of the hill. After an early tea we took our seats in an old Chevrolet of Mr. Everard's that he keeps for the purpose and started the most alarming climb I have ever experienced. I had no idea that any car could surmount such obstacles.

Our party consisted of the Everards and their small daughter, Hubert and myself, and we carried two tins of water for the car. There was no road, only a track steeply mounting, and the car took rocks, shrubs and everything that came along in its stride, while we clung to the sides not to be thrown out. Very soon the engine was boiling, and whenever we found a suitable spot we pulled up and watered it.

As we climbed the view became ever more beautiful, the mountains beyond the Tana River grew purple in the slanting sun, while to the north, nearly 70 miles away, the snow-clad peaks of Kenya showed silver above the mist which clung to the lower slopes.

Donya Sabuk, rich in vegetation, with crystal-clear springs making their way beneath moss-covered trees, was an enchanted world. Birds of exquisite plumage

SEARCHING FOR BUFFALO

and gorgeous butterflies flitted in the sunshine, and a herd of graceful impala fled at our approach, bounding in the air in their own peculiar fashion. One buck was a very handsome fellow with his lyre-shaped horns. He turned once to look at us and then, with a few great bounds in the air, he vanished.

We pulled up at an open space above a deep ravine and made our way through coarse grass, often shoulder high, which hid huge boulders of rock. It was not safe to venture into the forest, and our only hope of seeing buffalo was if they came out to feed. On the edge of this open space, looking over on to the vast plain below and to the Ythanga Hills beyond, there stood one old gnarled tree keeping guard over the grave of Sir Northrup MacMillan, who himself chose this site for his last resting-place where the wild denizens of the forest can pass to and fro. It was indeed a beautiful spot with a savage beauty, and I could well understand its appeal.

Not far from the grave is a salt lick and the ground is thickly crossed with buffalo paths. We clambered down to the head of the ravine hoping to see some buffalo ; this was a safe look-out, as the brutes cannot ascend the steep sides, but to our disappointment no buffalo were to be seen, though once we heard a vigorous snort telling of the hidden menace below.

As evening was approaching and the mountain was a dangerous place in the dark when the buffalo and the rhino emerge from the forest and the leopard leaves his cave, we returned to the car and negotiated the downhill track, reaching the Everards' house as night fell, where, over their door, hung the head of a fine buffalo shot a few years ago from the porch he now decorates.

THE MOUNTAIN OF MIST

After thanking the Everards for a very delightful afternoon we entered the car to return to Kianzabe, and though disappointed at not seeing a buffalo, I will always treasure the memory of my visit to that strangely beautiful mountain, Donya Sabuk, "the mountain of mist."

I am just back from a visit to Bumps and Timothy Walker. Their coffee estate, a few miles beyond Thika, lies on the edge of the Kikuyu Reserve, close to the Chania River. It is one of the best shambas in the country, but it has lately been the scene of a tragedy.

Sunday being observed in the colony as a day of rest, one of the squatters thought that he would start building himself a hut to house the girl he hoped to marry. The man went off to cut some wattle, and while carrying back a load he saw, to his horror, a lion watching him from a few yards off. He hastily climbed the nearest tree available, but it was only a thorn, and the lion, springing up, was able to claw his legs. The poor fellow fought desperately and with his hands tried to push the lion down. His cries brought some of his tribe to his assistance, who with knives, sticks and stones succeeded in driving away the brute, and the wounded man fell to the ground. One of the natives ran back to the Bumps's house to tell them about it, and they immediately started off in the motor with bandages and disinfectants to rescue the victim. They found him lying in a pool of blood. He was conscious and moaning for water, but his wretched fellows had done nothing to relieve his sufferings, not even fetching him water from the river close beside them. After giving him a drink

TIMOTHY SHOOTS A LION

and dressing his wounds as best they could, Bumps carefully lifted him on to a mattress they had brought for the purpose and drove him to hospital. It was found that, apart from the terrible wounds caused by the lion's claws, one arm and both his thighs were broken, and the poor youth died after a few days.

In the meantime, a man-eating lion could not be left to terrify the countryside, and that same afternoon Bumps and Timothy, each armed with a rifle and accompanied by some dogs, went to the spot where the lion was last seen entering some grass. A crowd of natives accompanied them, but being Wakikuyu they were not a brave crowd, and after pointing out the place they retired into the background. The dogs were sent into the long grass and soon got on to the trail. After a time the lion was seen slinking away through the bush towards the ravine on the edge of the river. Running to cut off the brute, Timothy got to within 150 yards, from where she obtained a clear view of his tawny body standing beside a bush and promptly fired. It was a good shot, as the bullet pierced his heart, but she plugged him with a second shot to make sure he was dead. On approaching they found him to be a fine specimen of the black-maned lion, but he was very thin. It was a mystery how he came to be on a coffee shamba where there was no game to attract him, and from the good condition of his coat and lovely mane he could not have been a confirmed man-eater as lions only resort to that when old and unable to obtain their usual food. Timothy was very pleased at securing such a fine specimen for her first lion and is having the skin cured.

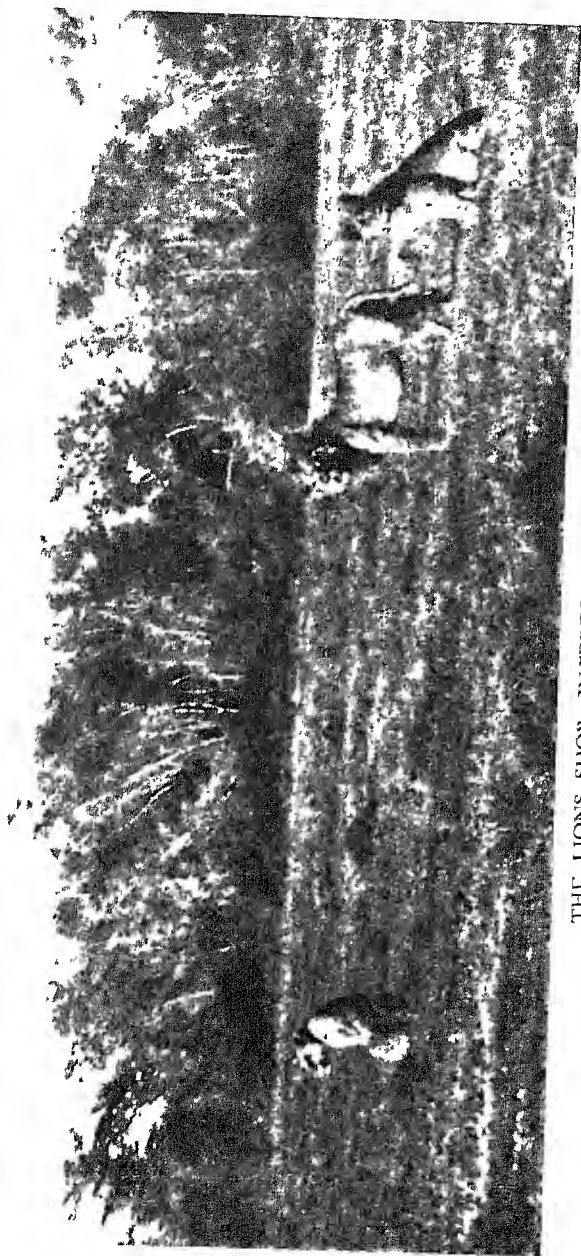
XV

A PRIVATE SANCTUARY

TOBY has returned from Ndururumo, having had a lovely time in that wild-animal sanctuary owned by Alan Tarlton, one of the famous family of white hunters known to all sportsmen who have visited East Africa.

Here on this estate of 11,000 acres, scarcely 8 miles from the bustling town of Nairobi, lies a swamp where are buffalo, and bush country full of lion, leopard and cheetah, while on the plain roam eland, zebra, kongoni, impala, wildebeest and most of the smaller antelope.

The first evening Toby, armed with a Mannlicher rifle and his cinema camera, was taken to the papyrus grass on the edge of the swamp with A. T. beside him carrying a heavy rifle for protection. Here Toby had the luck to film a cheetah with her young family. This was not so easy as it sounds and required some very dextrous stalking, combined with amazing good fortune. No lions showed themselves, but on the return journey he was allowed to stalk a bull eland, which he shot, and shortly afterwards he got a very fine impala. Two record heads for impala have been secured on this Reserve, and it was here that Mr. Roosevelt got his famous one, when he returned from his safari with Leslie Tarlton, uncle of A. T.



THE LIONS SHOW INTEREST IN THE CAMERA

STRANGE PETS

Next evening Toby returned to the lion swamp and saw three of the brutes about to leave for their kill ; Toby was taken up in the Ford car to within 35 yards, while A. T. and his uncle covered the lions with the rifles. Poor Toby confessed to feeling a bit nervous at first, but managed to secure a very interesting picture of the beasts. One of them looked nasty and kept crouching as if to spring, but luckily for himself he did not do so, and we hope that Toby has secured a very unique film.

A. T. had got some rather extraordinary pets. A python, fifteen feet long, lives in a box in his room and comes out every six months to be fed ; a young baboon, which may become dangerous, as they are difficult to tame, wanders about at its own sweet will ; and he once had a baby rhino weighing 700 pounds that walked into the dining-room, looking for its bucket of milk. When it grew to over a ton in weight it was sent to the Hamburg Zoo, where it now is living contentedly and still waxing in size and weight.

Lion cubs are most attractive pets ; they love a romp, and exact a lot of attention from their owners, lying on their back and asking to have their fat little tummies tickled.

Some years ago my sister brought two cubs back from Africa. Her husband had shot the lioness not knowing that she had cubs, and these babies were scarcely a month old. G—— wished to give one of the cubs to the local zoo, but was warned to keep both, for lions have great hearts, and the one alone would expend all its love and devotion on her, which would make the parting that must eventually take place a tragedy.

My sister looked after her strange protégés, feeding them with milk from a baby's bottle, brushing their coats and keeping them in great trim. When she embarked for England she took both little lions on board, but one died on the voyage, and she arrived at her home in Norfolk with the small boy, who became the pet of the household, romping with the children, dogs, and even the cat.

In time Rumiruti was promoted to a kennel in the garden, and it was very comic to watch him tugging at the nether garments of the hall-boy when he was cleaning his kennel out. This was a fine game for Rumiruti, and the boy lent himself to the fun by suddenly pretending to fall backwards, which afforded the little lion great pleasure. He revelled in his growing strength, but was always gentle.

Unfortunately just at that time a young man was injured by one of the two lions that were confined in a cage not 50 miles away. The lions were untamed, and the man foolishly walked in on them one dark winter's night and was knocked down and clawed by the lioness. A week after he died of blood-poisoning.

This caused a great outcry among the neighbours against poor little Rumiruti, and my sister, bowing to the force of public opinion, felt she must part with him and made arrangements to take him to the Bristol Zoo. He was nearly a year old and was growing a lovely black mane and promised to be a very fine fellow. The whole household was broken-hearted when the day arrived for my sister and Rumiruti to pack themselves into the van that was to convey them by train to Bristol. A lion was not allowed to travel as an ordinary passenger.

On arrival at the Zoo, Rumiruti was very crest-

TRAGEDY OF RUMIRUTI

fallen to find himself in strange surroundings. Lions, like cats, love their home ; as long as my sister stayed with him he kept up his spirits, and she spent long hours trying to reconcile him to his keeper and his new billet. But the day came when she must leave Rumiruti, and with a heavy heart she gave him a final hug and returned to Norfolk.

The place seemed empty without him, and the children missed their playmate.

Barely a week had elapsed before a wire arrived to say Rumiruti was ill, and G—— hastily returned to Bristol. Rumiruti was lying in his cage, his back to the world ; he had refused food, and in his eyes one read hopeless misery. When my sister went up to him he feebly tried to rise to welcome her. He was very weak, and he lay with his head on her lap, while she whispered words of comfort.

But she knew that Rumiruti could not live without her love, so she gave the order to shoot him with his head resting on her knee. They refused this last consolation, so she gave Rumiruti a final embrace, and, walking to the end of the cage, she heard the shot that put an end to the life of her baby lion.

To this day there are always two photographs on her dressing-table that never leave her—one of Rumiruti when happily at play in Norfolk, the other taken at Bristol, and in his eyes one sees his lion heart is broken.

Before leaving Alan Tarlton's unique estate Toby caught sight of a large wart-hog with abnormally

A PRIVATE SANCTUARY

fine tusks, and A. T. invited him back again if he could spare the time before returning to England. After five happy days, he and A. T. left in a safari lorry, packed with tents, provisions and equipment, to fetch me at Kianzabe for our trip to the northern frontier and Marsabit.

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PART III

MARSABIT—NANYUKI—THE ABERDARES

MOMBASA—KARURA

XVI

STARTING FOR MARSABIT

Far away, so faint and far, is flaming London, fevered Paris,
That I fancy I have joined another star ;
Far away the din and hurry ; far away the sin and worry ;
Far away . . . God knows they cannot be too far.

ROBERT SERVICE.

IT was on the 1st March that we started for our safari to the northern frontier. Our Bedford lorry, weighing one and a half ton, was more powerful than rapid ; the most it ever condescended to do was 30 miles an hour, when the road suited it. We had three natives, besides Simba, A. T.'s gun-bearer, who could be trusted to carry the second rifle ; was himself an excellent shot, and had never failed his master whatever the danger.

One of the natives was Hubert's servant, Ngolomo, who had valeted Toby and me and occasionally waited at table. Though he knew no English he was quick to understand what was required, washed our clothes beautifully and appeared a perfect servant.

We did one good action before we arrived at Thika. A. T. was driving, and when the car suddenly swerved, it was to crush neatly the head of a cobra as the reptile was crossing the road. We stopped to make sure it was dead.

We arrived at Meru late in the afternoon and put

up at our old friend the "Pig and Whistle." Here we found Hubert and James, who had left on the previous day for a brief holiday and had secured seven fish of a total weight of 35 pounds, all rainbow trout, in excellent condition and very good to eat. Hubert and James were not partaking of their catch that night, as they had been bidden to dine with the officers of the King's African Rifles at their depot close by.

I believe it was in 1900 that the Buganda Rifles were given the title of the "King's African Rifles." They were recruited from the unspoiled tribesmen of the desert and the plains, where dishonesty is comparatively rare, for it is among the Africans in the European settlements that the bad specimens are found. What remained of the old Sudanese Regiments after the debacle at Khartoum, who had been cut off in the heart of Africa, till rescued by Lugard, were merged into the corps. They are exceedingly smart in appearance, and it was during the Duke of Connaught's visit to this country that a sergeant of the Guards remarked that their drill compared favourably with the smartest British regiments. They are often in action while keeping order among the turbulent tribes on the northern frontier, and sometimes undergo great hardships in the inhospitable deserts; indeed, unless accompanied by a doctor the lot of a wounded man on the northern frontier is not enviable. During the Great War, knowing African conditions, they could fight and outlast any British regiments. They bore the brunt of the fighting, and their losses were 234 British officers and non-commissioned officers killed and some 16,000 casualties among the rank and file, of whom more than half were killed or died of wounds.

WE ENTER THE NORTHERN FRONTIER

Bumps, who was in command of one of the battalions, told me he had a Sudanese officer under him who was one of the three who broke the British square at Omdurman; when recruited for the K.A.R. he became a very efficient officer.

We did not leave Meru till nine the next morning, as we had to collect bread and fill a huge Chianti jar with ten and a half gallons of drinking-water. We also carried twelve "four gallon" tins of petrol, as we would not see petrol again till our return. Petrol is very expensive in Kenya; at Nairobi it costs 2s. 6d. a gallon and increases in price as you put the distance between yourself and the sea. By the time you reach Meru its price has risen to 4s. a gallon—a great drain on the settler's purse, as a car is the only means of transport in the country. I think petrol is the one thing that is costly in Kenya where living is wonderfully cheap.

We travelled for 10 miles through the lovely Meru forest and came to open rolling plains. We were descending rapidly to a country studded with large thorn trees, making shady groves, through whose gnarled branches we got glimpses of the distant mountains. On both sides of the road we started game-birds: plover, partridges, quail and lesser bustard, which took wing at our approach, also guinea-fowl in quantities, who ran scuttling into the bush. It was a bird paradise. We also saw our first gerenuk, a quaint little antelope, with a neck like a miniature giraffe and long thin legs; many consider it the best eating of all antelope.

In a little over the hour we crossed the river Siolo, which is the boundary between Kenya and the northern frontier, and we arrived at a dreary-looking

place called Isiolo, built by Empire builders, who, I am told, object to women or roads in this corner of the globe. Here we had to report and get a permit to enter the northern frontier, as women are very discouraged from coming in, and we signed a paper to say that we travelled at our own risk.

After leaving Isiolo, we ran into a shower of rain, and the road churned itself into red mud, through which we ploughed our way for some hours, till we skidded into Archers Post, which instead of a post is now a bridge over the river Uaso Nyero. This river rises in Kenya Mountain and ends its career in the Lorian Swamp, afterwards disappearing under the ground. Its waters are of a lovely blue-green colour and its palm-lined banks looked inviting to rest, but its beauty is deceptive, as its waters are infested with crocodile and its banks harbour the deadly mosquito, the spirillent tick and the tsetse fly. A. T. showed me one of the latter horrors.

Archers Post is a trading-place between the desert and the sown; here come caravans from all parts of the northern frontier, from the Turkhana country, from Somaliland and Abyssinia. They come to trade in camels and in cattle. They do not hurry. They are content to squat for months. . . . Time counts for nothing with the nomad, who measures it by the rising and the setting of the sun.

Some of the Samburu came to stare at our lorry, and in their arrogant bearing, the insolence in their eyes, one felt their hatred of the white races. We did not appreciate their attentions, as this lawless tribe make no more account of murder than does a schoolboy of killing a fly. A girl will taunt a youth that he is no warrior because he has not blooded his

QUAINT BUT GRACEFUL GIRAFFE

spear, and he will turn to thrust that spear through the first man available. Lately many particularly brutal murders have taken place, and as this tribe refuse to give up the culprits the Government has put a fine on the whole tribe. The Samburu warriors may no more carry their spears. They have been taken from them. This is a frightful disgrace; it is rather pathetic to see these savages carrying bamboo sticks.

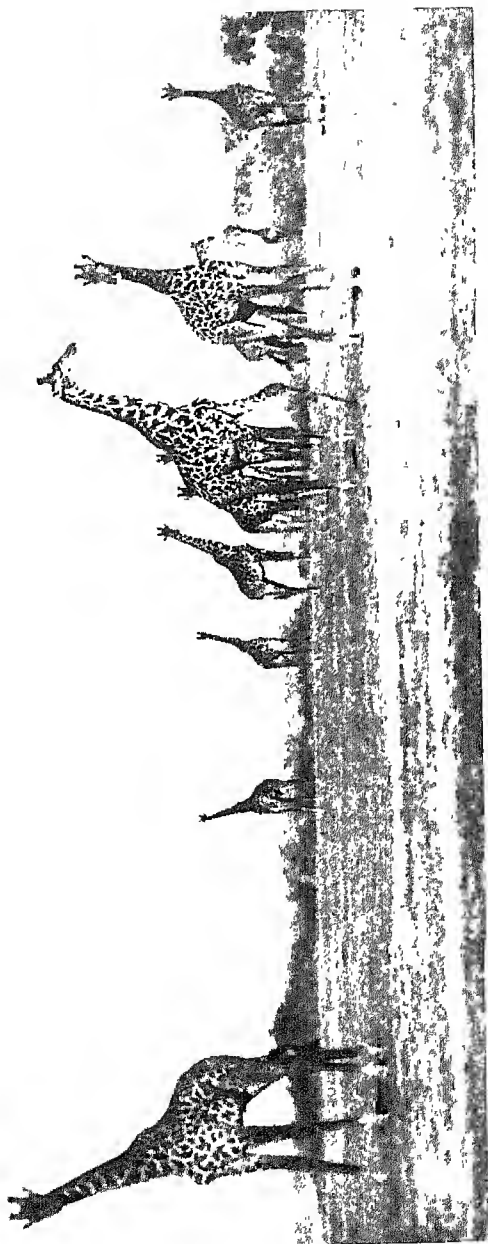
The rain has ceased, and the distance from here to Marsabit is roughly 150 miles. We pushed on, wishing to camp at Merile for the night. We were now in an arid country that carried no vegetation except the whistling thorn, with black fruit resembling an olive, much appreciated by rhino. Sometimes groves of mimosa and acacia, with gnarled and graceful stems, broke the monotony of the landscape. The road would not have been difficult, but for the "sand-luggas" we encountered every few hundred yards; they are dry water-courses with steep sides and deep sandy bottoms and have to be taken slowly. We encountered 184 of these "luggas."

The rainstorm we had met during the morning had passed lightly over this country, laying the dust and cooling the air. As we approached Merile the land became less sterile. It was pleasant to see green acacia trees and silver thorns, from which hung, in many hundreds, the odd, pear-shaped nests of the weaver birds. Some tall giraffes bent their slender necks over the trees to gaze at us with their large, soft eyes; they were the beautiful, reticulated giraffe, standing 18 feet high, with deep tawny orange hides covered with a fine network of white lines, and are one of Africa's most delightful pictures. Once we

glimpsed a rhino in the distance. I would never have known the brute was there, standing motionless in the shade of some thorn trees, if A. T. had not drawn my attention to her. She appeared a very old lady, with her loose wrinkled skin hanging in folds. Near her stood her infant son, a little less wrinkled, a little less monstrous than his mother. We stopped the car to watch these prehistoric beasts, by no means beautiful, and so stupid and easy to shoot that one fears their extinction is only a matter of time. Their one protection against the human foe is the tick-bird that lives on the vermin hidden in the loose folds of their skin; these birds are always on the alert to give the poor old rhino warning when danger threatens.

We also met a solitary ostrich, a male bird in magnificent plumage; his jet-black coat and the white feathers of his wings as he spread them out to run showed his truly royal pedigree. There were many Grevy zebra. The Grevy stands from 15.2 to 16 hands high, has a finely-striped coat, large soft ears and is a strikingly handsome beast. The difference between him and his plebeian cousin is that between a racehorse and a hack. As these animals are immune from the tsetse fly, a white hunter named Rattray conceived the idea of taming them and breaking them into work in districts where horses and oxen cannot be used. The ordinary zebra is a vicious brute, but the Grevy showed himself quite amenable, and I believe that Rattray once drove a team of four of these beautiful beasts from his farm near Isiolo to Nairobi, a distance of nearly 200 miles, without a mishap, the animals showing no fear or resentment at motor-cars or street traffic.

Unfortunately Mr. Rattray died last year, leaving



RETICULATED GIRAFFE NEAR UISO NYERO RIVER

CAMP AT MERILE

his wife, Lord Furness's daughter, a widow after a very short married life, and the zebras have all been scattered and sold.

Toby had a twenty-bore gun with which he amused himself by shooting at sand-grouse or lesser bustard ; he managed to kill several of the former, which were useful for our supper that evening. Before sunset we crossed a wide river-bed of sand. This river, when it is a river, which is only after the long rains, has its source in the eastern slopes of the Matthew range of mountains and flows into the Uaso Nyero about 70 miles west of the Lorian Swamp. It is bordered by Dom palms, whose red fruit is much loved by the elephant, but they are usually at a height that would tax the ingenuity of a giraffe. The elephant is never at a loss, and once he has made up his mind that it is worth the effort he presses his forehead against the trunk and shakes it till the fruit, and often the whole tree, comes crashing down.

On arrival at Merile we camped for the night close to a large rocky hill. Toby and I shared the small tent. The natives slept in the body of the lorry, having packed its contents under the car for fear of rain, while Alan Tarlton said he would doze in the open, with his heavy rifle to hand in case a rhino proved too curious.

Even when driving the lorry that rifle, loaded, stood ready at his right hand and gave one a nice satisfying feeling of safety in this home of the lion and rhino.

The sunset was gorgeous, but some ominous clouds were gathering and soon lightning lit up the northern horizon. We hurried to finish our supper before the storm arrived. Our table and chairs were set in the open ; the lightning was so continuous that it

STARTING FOR MARSABIT

lit the sky, making our lamp superfluous. Soon the rain arrived—the rain of the tropics—that comes in sheets, blotting out the universe. Toby and I were safe from it in our small double tent. The natives crouched under the rain-proof sheet which is always carried, while A. T. took refuge in the driver's seat of the lorry.

After an hour the rain ceased, and then started the voices of the wild ; beasts of prey were creeping out for their night's hunting, hyenas howled, zebras grunted and once a lion's deep roaring made me hold my breath. It was some way off, but there was no mistaking that impressive hollow roar. Toby awoke to it, and we listened for it to come nearer, for when the lion roars all other sounds are stilled. The rain had put out our fires, but we knew that A. T. was on the alert, with his two powerful rifles and his gun-bearer, Simba, who had been with him, and with his father before him, for many years and could always be relied on in whatever emergency arose. Again we heard that deep-throated sinister roar, but this time it was farther away.

In the early morning started the chorus of the birds ; the harsh call of the guinea-fowl ; the shrill chirp of the cricket, varied by the deep note of the bull-frog, and later followed the hornbill, the fly-catcher, the mocking-bird, the ubiquitous cuckoo and the plantain-eater, in whose plaintive cry we thought to hear the echo of the voices of the old men of the mountain.

XVII

THE LONE MOUNTAIN OF MARSABIT

WE had broken camp and were away by 7 a.m., and in a couple of hours arrived at Lai-Sarmis, which is a collection of hills and fantastic rocks hurled up in chaotic fashion by long-extinct volcanoes. Here, beside the road, were spread a long line of whitened skulls—all that remained to tell of the many rhino that had fallen victims to the insatiable greed of the game-hunter, or possibly to his lust for the money the Chinese are willing to pay for the horn, from which they make medicine. A. T. told us he never camped here on safari as there were too many rhino about and from being continually hunted they had become very savage. We only saw a few nomads with camels.

We were now about to enter the Kasut desert which, studded with thorn bush, stretched on our right to Abyssinia, 300 miles away, while to our left still farther off, lay that sinister lake, named Rudolf, situated in the Kasut where it merges into the Koroli desert—a land of heat and thirst, uninhabited by man or beast.

Entering the Kasut one felt the last contact with civilization was broken; to this remote corner of Africa no echoes of the busy, noisy world could penetrate. All cares are washed away in the clean

air of the desert, clear and bright as crystal from the recent rain.

Before many miles we came on some oryx, but unfortunately they had already seen us and did not give a chance of a photograph. These large powerfully built antelope have long rapier-like horns, very straight and finely pointed, which even a lion fears; some hunters consider them as dangerous as buffalo when cornered.

Shortly after passing the oryx, a herd of Grant's gazelle were seen on a distant hill. We pulled up, and Toby, armed with a 350 Rigby, went off alone to try and stalk them, while we sat and watched from the car. We badly wanted meat. We could make out one fellow with a fine head, which even at the distance stood out apart from the rest. When Toby started climbing the hill he was lost to sight, but we kept our eyes fixed on the Granti and saw the big fellow stand for a second, when a shot rang out and he jumped high in the air. Toby had shot beneath him and he went off with the rest of the herd. Shortly after, a second shot broke his two forelegs. Toby had fired from 250 yards and we could see him creeping closer. When within 80 yards he finished him with a shot through the heart.

Simba immediately jumped out of the lorry and rushed off to cut his throat and ghalloch him; when I arrived on the scene the beast had been dragged down the hill. Scarcely had Simba finished his task when a speck in the sky became larger and disclosed itself to be a vulture dropping like a plummet to earth. Soon a crowd of excited snarling birds of prey were fighting and jostling for the entrails of the dead antelope . . . the screeching, screaming and



BORAN WOMEN COVERING THEIR MOUTHS AT SIGHT OF
STRANGERS

brushing of wings making a nightmare of sound. We left them to their revolting meal and hurried back to the lorry. The Granti was lovely, with his delicate pale fawn coat and his graceful head, crowned with the long curved horns tapering to a point. Toby had secured a splendid trophy, and our larder was well stocked.

The rain of the night before had cooled the air but made the going heavy and in one place we were badly stuck for some time. It was past midday before we started the ascent of Marsabit, which is a long low mountain with a base measuring nearly 200 miles and with numerous peaks and craters thickly forested on the higher slopes.

We met some of the Boran tribe with their cattle on the lower hills. They are fine-looking people, Ethiopian by descent, Moslems by religion, who are peacefully inclined and give very little trouble. The women, with their hair plaited in fine plaits standing out from their heads to fall square on their shoulders, often wear a narrow circlet round their foreheads, reminding me of some of the figures one sees depicted on the walls of ancient Egyptian temples: their small straight noses, in shape almost Semitic, combined with their slender figures to make them most attractive. Both men and women were dressed in flowing garments.

Travelling on for a couple of hours, always gently climbing, we arrived at the few huts, which constitute the Bomo or capital, to report ourselves to the District Commissioner. He and his delightful wife were most hospitable and insisted on putting us up for the night. It was already four o'clock and we had only eaten oranges since our early breakfast, so we did full justice to the high tea provided. One of

THE MOUNTAIN OF MARSABIT

the greatest joys on safari, in my opinion, is when you get your bath, clean clothes and a meal all within one blessed hour.

The Hyde Clarkes had only been a week at Marsabit, but they did not appear to mind the loneliness ; they had a charming small daughter and an English nurse ; a most attractive house with a roof of native thatching and a garden full of possibilities in which our hostess was much interested. Perched on the side of a hill, the forest came down to meet the back garden, and in the night the elephants could often be heard screaming to each other and tearing the branches of the trees.

After dinner we went to see a native dance—a series of jumps and shakes, accompanied by the throbbing of a drum and a monotonous chant in a minor key. This Ngoma had been going on some time and the performers were getting rather drunk on their emotions. In a circle, their hands resting on each other's shoulders, they leapt higher and higher, occasionally giving loud whoops ; while the incessant throbbing of the drum incited them to further efforts—now and then a man fell exhausted.

At Khartoum, some fifty years ago, an Englishman heard this same performance, as the Mahdi's follower's filled themselves with courage for the final act of murder. For days and nights, to the incessant throbbing of the drums, many hundred thousand fanatics, men and women, were dancing the Ngoma in an ever-narrowing circle as they closed round the Englishman . . . in the beating of the drums, the frenzied yelling of the mob, Gordon heard his doom.

As our lorry had not been unpacked, we expected

A GIGANTIC CRATER

to make an early start next day. We wished to pitch our camp near some water-holes some 20 miles up in the forest, but Ngolomo was missing. On inquiry we heard that he had been to the Ngoma the previous night and not returned. We waited some time while the D.C. sent to the village, but it was past midday before the unrepentant Ngolomo put in an appearance and we were able to make a start.

The site chosen for our camp was a small open plateau surrounded by forest, with a valley beneath where the game came to drink in the late afternoon; it was supposed to be a favourite place for elephant.

Our hosts had done everything to make life easy, lending us a large tent and inviting us back to stay on our last night of safari on Marsabit, which invitation we gladly accepted.

On our way to Bolessa, which means a water-hole, we passed the Bongoli Crater and left the car to visit this enormous natural amphitheatre, which is 3 miles across and 2,700 feet deep. The bottom, which is usually a lake, has now completely dried up, and the sides are clothed in dense forest. In one corner, half-way up the steep cliff, was a spring where the animals came out at night to drink. We saw no sign of life in that immense crater, though we knew it harboured buffalo and rhino, and the forest scouts reported having seen eighteen elephants there the previous night. But elephants travel fast; their normal pace is a walk at 8 miles an hour, and they think nothing of covering 80 miles in a night.

On the edge of the crater we saw some baboons, which Toby, after a difficult stalk, managed to film, and there were many tracks of elephants. Our drive to Bolessa was through very beautiful country. The

hills were fissured with deep gullies where once the molten lava had crept. These gullies and ravines were now clothed in verdure and tropical vegetation that soothed and pleased our eyes after the sun-scorched Kasut desert.

At sunset, after pitching our camp, we walked to the water-holes a quarter of a mile away, situated in a valley surrounded by forest, where we patiently sat behind some thorn bushes to watch for elephant. A. T. carried the rifle, which never leaves him. As the sun went down we heard the shrill trumpeting of the great beasts and soon a cow and her comic little calf appeared, followed by two bulls. It was with a feeling of awe we watched these mighty beasts approaching the water with majestic tread, their bodies swaying, their trunks swinging, their great ears flapping in a perfect rhythm. The rhino, the lion, the buffalo must wait their turn, for no animal in creation dare interfere with the King of Beasts. They stood near the pool, lifting the water with their trunks to spread it over their backs. The evening breeze was steadily blowing from them to us and we could hear their digestive organs keeping up an incessant rumbling. The light was too dim for Toby to take a picture, so hoping for better luck the following evening we did not risk disturbing them and stole quietly back to camp.

All night we heard the elephants' shrill trumpeting, a sound weird and impressive yet difficult to describe. Also the clatter of buffalo hooves as the heavy beasts moved from the forest to take their turn at the water-hole. Once a rhino snorted close to the tent, but the fires made him think discretion was the better part of valour.

A. T. kept watch during the first half of the night, and Simba took his place before the advent of the dawn.

The fires were still flickering when I left the tent to drink in the freshness of the new day ; to watch the stars pale as the dim blue night brightened to rose and silver, while the eastern sky glowed red and gold from the reflection of the sun as it rose from beneath the horizon in the splendour of the African dawn.

We spent the morning quietly in camp ; during the afternoon we invaded the forest in search of buck. We had left some of the Granti gazelle with the Hyde Clarkes, and with the aid of our camp retinue we had finished the rest, for meat must be eaten quickly in the tropics.

The Marsabit forests are more strange than beautiful ; their mysterious recesses give an effect of gloom. It was here we had what might have proved a nasty accident, for a mamba, the most deadly snake in Africa, was lying partly coiled up under a bush along our path. We suddenly saw the shining black skin, flecked with the sunshine, where it filtered through the foliage. I was on the left of A. T. and hastily stepped behind him, but the reptile was already darting out its tongue with a hissing noise, and lifting its flat head from side to side.

I think it must have been some ten feet away, but I still remember the malevolent eyes, the cruelty and unclean horror they reflected, and the dreadful hissing that sounded like an escape of steam which emanated from it.

Before I had time to realize the danger A. T. had fired, and the heavy bullet smashed into the coils, blowing back the head by the force of the concussion. With its back broken the mamba still tried to drag itself

after us till another bullet blew its head off, and so ended an episode that will always haunt me and which was so near to being a tragedy.

Still shaken with the horror of our encounter we continued our walk, passing between high columns of trees festooned with grey-green lichens and black mosses, the lichens looking like silver filigree necklaces, often two to three feet in length. Giant fig trees, with distorted roots, flung their grotesque limbs over other growths, stifling the life beneath.

Some of the trees had forced their way through the boles of weaker ones ; some were covered with vines and creepers that strangled and oppressed them ; from some hung massed lianas suspended like ropes from the topmost branches to the ground. Nearly every tree was covered with patches of parasitical growths, and every tree was so wreathed and festooned in the grey lichens that no green was visible. The farther we adventured into the forest the more did the gloom and silence impress itself on us. This silence was not a mere absence of sound, but something definitely suggestive of strain ; one sensed the teeming of hidden life ; one could not escape the tremendous presence of unseen elephants. . . . If there is any beauty in these forests, it is an unreal beauty and a menace to man.

On the fringe of the forest we saw many baboons, a few Colobus monkeys and one buck, which did not give us the chance of a shot, so we returned to camp without the meat we had promised the cook.

In the evening we again hid ourselves behind the thorn bushes and waited till darkness set in, but the elephants failed to come out. All we saw was a large party of baboons, making their way back to

the forest after their drink—big baboons and baby baboons playing, quarrelling and racing about, totally unaware of our presence. We could hear them long after they had disappeared from sight. With baboons, family squabbles are the order of the day. The male displays no affection for his offspring and hits out viciously if they approach too near, but the female is a devoted mother.

Later on, there occurred a terrible din; evidently a leopard was hunting them, and the creatures, though safe high up in the branches, were shrieking their fear to the night. Presently, when very human screams rent the air, making our blood run cold, we knew one of their number was supplying the leopard with a meal. When the leopard pretends to leap up on the tree, the foolish creatures lose their heads and hop to the ground, where one of them falls an easy prey to the wily enemy. We were thankful when those awful screams ceased.

Our last night was doomed to tragedy—yet probably a typical night of the forest. The moon had risen over the tree-tops when the hyenas started their discordant howls—strange long-drawn-out wails. From every quarter the brutes were calling, for in the forest beyond the water-holes a lion had made a kill. We could hear his grunts as he tore at his quarry. Shortly he was joined by a lioness and her cub, which gave out odd little squeals. The hyenas waited at a safe distance to finish the meal when the lions were sated.

There is a story that once a hyena, in its zeal to feed, ate its way into a dead elephant and gorged itself till its sides were too distended to allow it to get out through the hole by which it had entered. When

the sportsman, accompanied by his native retinue, returned to skin the elephant, he saw to his horror and amazement the head of the hyena protruding from the carcass. It was trapped inside the great mammal and was looking out, as through a window. After putting a bullet through the hyena's head, it was found that the strong muscles of the elephant's body had enclosed the prisoner as effectively as though it had been held in a steel trap. As the brute had gorged itself to nearly twice its natural size it had sated its voracious appetite—perhaps it died happy.

Later we gently threaded our way to our hiding-place behind the thorn bushes, expectantly on the look out, fearing to find a savage beast behind each rock, in every thicket. We could hear a rhino wheezing round; occasionally a lion roared . . . but the moon-flooded space about the water-holes was empty.

In a land where water is precious, the law of the forest forbids a kill at a water-hole, and this law is observed by all creatures excepting the leopard. This brute knows no law except his own rapacious lust.

One hopes that men have the decency to obey the law of the forest, for one can scarcely imagine a greater meanness than shooting a defenceless animal when it is slaking its thirst.

Time was passing all too quickly; we must not linger in this forest glade, with the valley beneath, where bubbled the springs that meant life to so many of God's creatures.

Next day we struck camp. We are moving to another forested hill, where lies the Crater Lake

THE CRATER LAKE

which has been written up by the adventurous travelers who have seen it as the wonderland of the wild, the spiritual home of the African elephant.

To reach the Crater Lake, we followed the trail of an elephant path, which wound in and out among the trees. Occasionally we had to stop and saw away a tree that lay across our road, evidently pushed down by a gentleman or lady who wished to eat its topmost branches. We saw many signs of elephant—but none of very recent date. In places the forest, with its mighty cedars and camphor-wood trees rising in towering columns above the festoons of liana and knotted vines, gave the impression of the stately aisles of a great shadowy cathedral. But always the trees were festooned with garlands of silver lichens and black mosses. Here and there shafts of sunshine filtered through the heavy foliage.

On arriving at the Crater Lake we met nothing but disappointment. The springs in the plains being dried up, the natives had brought their cattle to drink the muddy water still left at the bottom of the crater, which prevented the game approaching. The Borans and other desert tribes were now camped at the foot of the mountain, and every third day they drove their cattle to this Crater Lake. So precious was the water that each herd could only come in its turn. When one lot had finished drinking, a second lot, seemingly without orders, would come forward. Though the animals were obviously frantic for water, their patience filled one with admiration. From the rising of the sun to the early afternoon there was no peace at the Crater Lake; it was only at night that the forest inhabitants dared slake their thirst. The elephant had gone—migrated to some forest haunt

known to themselves alone. They did not share their kingdom with cattle!

After a night camped near this phantom lake we came to the conclusion that as the game had departed there was nothing more to wait for. We packed up, to return to the Boma where our kind hosts awaited us. I believe some American, under the impression that he had discovered it, wished to name this crater "Lake Paradise," but surely its ancient name, Lake Mar-Sabit explains it better.

We travelled along a wide smooth path made by elephant till we reached the road that encircled the foot-hills of Marsabit. To the west ran a track that led to Lake Rudolf, whose grim waters, nearly 400 miles away, are worthy of mention for the Nile perch found in them, testing the anglers' skill and endurance as they often weigh up to 150 pounds.

Farther on, between two hills, stretched the lone way to Moyale, our farthest outpost on the northern frontier; it is actually within the Abyssinian border. There was once some feeling among the Abyssinians at the British occupation of this post, which, according to local rumour, took place through a wily Greek trader having become a British subject, hoisting the British flag and demanding protection. Moyale was from that day a British Post, but for many years it remained unfortified owing to native susceptibilities, but a time came when Moyale had to be put in a state of defence and the Abyssinians made no protest.

We arrived at the Boma of Marsabit at sunset. It was indeed a pleasure to be welcomed by the D.C. and his charming wife; one felt like coming home. After dinner we played a game of Rummie and as we all observed different rules it was a most amazing

FAREWELL TO MARSABIT

game. We went to bed early. We were starting at daybreak, hoping to reach Meru the same night, which showed we were optimists. We bid farewell to our host and hostess, thanking them for their many kindnesses and I trust that we may one day meet again in London, the great meeting-place of the British exile.

XVIII

MUD THE ENEMY

NEXT morning we were up and ready before the dawn, to be told that the faithless Ngolomo had again played truant. It was the more exasperating, as A. T. had told the men the night before that we were making an early start and forbidding them to leave their quarters.

Ngolomo had ignored the orders and gone off the previous night into the blue, so we determined to leave him behind. As he was a squatter on Hubert's estate, owning one wife and many cattle, we knew he would return in the course of time. Our host came out to wish us farewell and promised to put the delinquent under arrest as soon as he could be discovered. That would mean that he would have to work and do hard work until a passing lorry would give him a lift to Isiolo, or possibly to Thika. We had found out that Ngolomo objected to work, also that lorries only visited Marsabit once in a fortnight. The outlook for Ngolomo was not a pleasant one, but one felt no sympathy for the rascal.

Leaving the Boma at Marsabit while the dawn was yet faint in the east, we sped along at a good speed over a well-packed clay trail. By the light of the moon, which was still bright, we watched to see that none of the larger game was prowling near our path. We

had no wish to be charged by rhino or to argue matters with an elephant who might consider we were intruding on his domain. Occasionally a startled buck flashed across into the bush, a pale shape in the moonlight.

The sun rose as we entered the Kasut desert. I left Marsabit without regret; to me its forest held more cruelty than beauty, while poor Toby was bitterly disappointed at not securing a film of the elephants. Evidently most of the game have deserted. When the rain fill the springs and water-holes in the plains, and the cattle once more remain on their own pastures, it is possible the elephant will return to their forests.

It was terribly hot. The Kasut was quivering in the sun-rays. We saw water where there was no water and the illusion of mirage made us no cooler. At Merile we stopped to breakfast, and water and cool our engine, which was boiling. We had pushed the poor thing rather hard and it had been protesting for some time. The heat was almost unbearable. We were only eleven hundred feet above sea-level. The bush country was no improvement as there was no shade and no breeze.

It was here we met many flocks of sheep, small fawn-coloured sheep with fine hair coats, rather like goats. The tribal shepherds were taking them through the hot desert from the northern frontier to Nairobi, where there is a large demand for them, as they are excellent meat and they average 14s. a head. The country round Nairobi is unsuitable for sheep; it is mostly cultivated with coffee and sisal; while the Kikuyu and Wakamba tribes occupy a very great extent of it and do not care for sheep, preferring their

maize fields and banana plantations, and the cattle and goats for milk and barter.

These small sheep appear to flourish on the desert thorns, some of which hold a liquid which makes them independent of water. It is surprisingly seldom that lions take toll of the flock. There is an abundance of game, and they seem to prefer zebra to mutton.

The shepherds carry calabashes, which they fill with water to tide them over the distances between the wells.

I could not but feel sorry for the poor little sheep so cheerfully making their long trek of 600 miles to Nairobi and the butcher.

On nearing Archers Post we passed game in plenty ; Grevy zebra, oryx, Granti, gerunuk and the little dikdik, which I believe can be tamed and made into a fascinating pet. Also we saw many species of birds : The King Vulture, the Griffon, the Harpy-Eagle and the Fish-Hawk, easily the most beautiful of them all. At Archers Post we once again lunched on the banks of the Uaso Nyero. While the car was being filled with petrol and water we sat under the arches of the bridge—it was shady and comparatively cool. While here, some army lorries passed us with the K.A.R. They were on their way to the outposts on the northern frontier. Is trouble brewing in Abyssinia ?

We reached Isiolo at 4.30, and after reporting to the D.C. we wasted no time at that unattractive spot. When we arrived at the little river that forms the boundary of the northern frontier, we saw the hills to the south hidden in rain-clouds, and 50 miles away, over Nanyuki, the lightning was playing, making the outlook ominous. If it rained, the steep hill to Meru was most dangerous. It was a question

of camping beside the stream where there was no firewood, or adventuring on the new road which cut across the hills to Nanyuki. Taking our courage in both hands, we chose the latter course, though none of us had ever travelled the road. For the first few miles all went well. Then the rain came down in torrents. We put chains over the wheels, which enabled us to crawl at about four miles an hour, skidding from side to side, until we reached the foothills. Here our troubles really began, and our speed fell to $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour, while we occasionally stopped to back for a run at a steeper slope. Twice our car was imbedded in mud to above the wheel axle, and each time the laborious task of digging it out had to be accomplished. Here I must give the Bedford engine some words of praise for its pluck in getting us out of what appeared a quite impossible situation.

Striking a match to look at the time we found it was past ten o'clock. We had been travelling in the dark horror of the night for nearly four hours. We finally reached the forested slopes of Mount Kenya, where our fear of rhino and buffalo was drowned in the more present fear of sliding over one of the many precipices that fell away from the slippery substance that called itself a road. Struggling out of the forest, we came on to the grassy hills that stood between us and the main road, where we found it more practical to travel on the grass. Occasionally we had to take a lead from Toby, who, armed with a torch, walked in front to vet the ground and lead us back to the road when it was necessary to cross a culvert. Our hopes were buoyed up with the thought that soon we must come on to the main road,

where, in our innocence, we assumed our difficulties would be at an end.

At last the signboard loomed through the rain and blackness, telling us, by aid of a torch, that we were 15 miles from Nanyuki. It was past midnight and we had every hope of reaching Nanyuki in an hour, but we were doomed to disappointment, as our lorry slid from side to side, rebounding from the banks and occasionally slewing round to face the wrong way. We discovered that the Public Works Department had been at work on this section of the road, lifting the loose earth from the sides to form a high camber in the centre, which was now a sea of mud. Our progress was reduced from $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour to a miserable one, as we often had to stop and dig off the mud which had balled on the back tyres, fairly acting as a brake on the wheels. We were never out of the lowest gear, and though we were frozen with wet and cold, our heated engine had to be watered every mile. We had climbed from the heat of the Kasut desert, which is barely a thousand feet above sea-level, to an altitude of 7,000 feet on the Kenya Mountain. The last section of 2 miles where the P.W.D. had not been at work was quite amenable, and we arrived at the "Silver Beck," the small hotel that stands on the Equator, just south of Nanyuki, at 2.45 a.m. We had been travelling for twenty-one hours. Here we had some difficulty in rousing the sleeping inmates; finally the Indian steward came out and attended to us. We found the huts ready with beds prepared for possible travellers, and he brought us hot water. No food was possible at that hour, but though we had eaten nothing since we lunched at Archers Post, we were far too exhausted to care;

after washing some of the peculiarly red sticky mud of Kenya off, we tumbled into bed.

Next morning we made up for our long fast with an excellent breakfast, and it would be difficult to praise too highly this small hotel, kept by an ex-naval officer and his wife. A noticeable feature when travelling in Kenya is the number of comfortable little hotels to be found perched on the hills, often in very inaccessible places. These hotels generally consist of a number of huts raised from the ground; a living-room and a dining-room. Each bedroom has got its own primitive bathroom. They are generally run by ex-officers, naval or military, and their wives, who, fearing neither the work nor the loneliness, do their utmost to make their guests welcome; but it must be a struggle for them to make ends meet; often there must be days, perhaps weeks, during the rainy season, when no guests come to be made welcome. It must have been ten o'clock before we breakfasted. The early cup of tea that was brought to our bedsides was not discovered by any of us till it was cold and unappetizing.

Before leaving for Kianzabe, A. T. took the lorry to the garage for some small adjustment, where he heard that we were not the only sufferers from the totally unexpected rain. Lord Furness, with a party and nine lorries, was stuck somewhere in the northern frontier, and two lorries were being sent to his rescue; this made us realize how lucky we were to be once again in a more or less civilized country.

It was nearly twelve o'clock before we left the "Silver Beck" and the morning sun had dried the roads. We had an easy run for the first 40 miles, when again the black clouds gathered and the hills

hid themselves in drenching rain ; it began to look as if the long rains due in April had come a month too soon, but after two years of drought the weather might continue to do the unexpected.

We put on our chains and skidded a bit, but though the roads were wet we were cheered by the green of the countryside. The maize, the coffee, the flowers, the trees, were all veiled in fresh verdure and everything smelled delicious.

It was on the road near Fort Hall that we met a large company of youths singing and dancing. Adorned with cowrie shells and plastered in white clay that completely masked their faces they were preparing themselves for the ceremony of initiation, which enables them to take their place in the tribe and attain the dignity of manhood.

For some months before the festival they spend their time going round the country, showing themselves in the markets and public assemblies, always singing one particular song, while practising intricate steps and endeavouring to acquire the necessary strength and fortitude to enable them to support the exhausting and painful ordeal ahead. Round their knees were fringes of monkey fur, and they carried long dancing-staves.

I am told that practically no European has ever seen the whole initiation that takes place. The ceremony is generally held during April and May, after the grain has been sown and before it is ready to be gathered, and when little labour is required in the fields. Both boys and girls go through the rite of initiation, the youths generally when from 14 to 17 years old and the girls when slightly younger. The circumcision rite is the occasion for a public festival,



BOYS PREPARING THEMSELVES FOR INITIATION RITES

when not only the parents and relations, but the villagers from far and near assemble.

The poor little victims are held firmly down, the boys by a man, the girls by two women, and it is a point of honour that no cry escapes their lips. Occasionally a boy will bite his tongue half through and many of the girls faint, but if either boy or girl cries out, they are disgraced for life.

The reason for the mutilation of the girl is that while it does not impair her chance of motherhood it takes away any desire on her part to "give the glad eye" to any but her husband.

We reached Kianzabe at 8.30 and heard from Hubert of their wonderful sport on the Gazita River, where they had landed 23 fish in two days; the largest trout weighing 7 pounds 6 ounces. All the fish were very game and it took them all their time to secure them.

Three inches of rain had fallen, but it was very local. A great deal of the country was still suffering from drought. As this was only the middle of March, and the long rains are not due for some weeks, I am praying that they will wait till after our departure.

XIX

THE ABERDARES

THE Aberdare Mountains, 70 miles away, are beckoning to us from their lovely summits, whose outline at this distance remind me of the Chuchulin Hills in Skye. Leaving Kianzabe at 8 a.m., armed with fishing-rods and lunch, we all four packed ourselves into the Chevrolet and drove past that singularly unattractive spot, the village of Thika.

Perhaps it is incorrect to call it a village, for Thika may soon be a flourishing town, as a promising industry has risen in the country : the making of tannin from wattle which is grown extensively in the Kikuyu Reserve solely for the purpose. The natives strip the wattle trees of their bark and spread it out in the sun to dry, and from this is extracted the dye. There are two rival factories in Thika, one run by an Englishman and one by Indians. This industry probably has a great future and may be a source of wealth to native and white man alike.

The rain has passed away ; it came in time to save many hundred acres of coffee, maize and crops. Much of the country is a delicious green, but it was very local. There are districts where it has failed, and there must be many a disappointed settler who watched the rain descending on his neighbour's farm,

while his remained bone dry. Thika is one of the districts unblessed by rain.

Crossing the two rivers, we turned left-handed to climb a long hill and passed many hundred acres of dead and dying coffee, representing the worldly goods of the unhappy settlers. We then entered the native Reserve and, always climbing, we drove through the heart of the Kikuyu country. At first this land, planted in maize and bananas, was also scorched and yellow, even the wattle was drooping, and, but for the British occupation, many natives would have perished ere now.

Winding our way up and down the hills, but always mounting higher, we entered a green country, and it was refreshing to see the valleys rich in maize, bananas and sweet potatoes, planted in the haphazard cultivation of the native, with mimosa and other shrubs relieving the monotony.

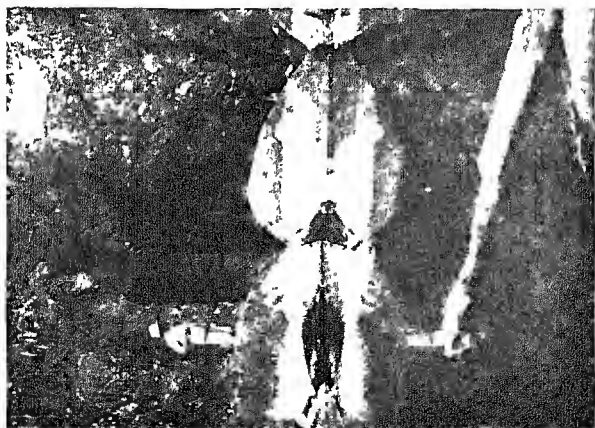
We were in the heart of Kikuyu land, a sea of hills and vales, and, as far as the eye could reach, in all directions was spread one huge garden, every inch of it private property with carefully-marked boundaries that have been bequeathed from father to son for generations.

Each time we topped a hill it seemed to unveil a more lovely vista, while the Aberdares and the forests of the lower slopes were a panorama of splendour. The rainfall, due to the proximity of the mountains, makes this land rich in vegetation, and at 7,000 feet our road, which had degenerated into a mere track, was bordered with green bracken, giant groundsels with large round heads of yellow feathery plumes, magnolias and tropical trees of many varieties; flaming cambrettians draped the latter with scarlet blossom.

of elephants out of our mind, for in the river lay the dead body of a bongo, freshly killed by a leopard whose meal we had probably disturbed. From the position of the body the leopard had evidently sprung on the poor beast's back and broken it; its pathetic head was thrust forward and its beautiful horns, tipped with ivory, lay half buried in the stream.

These forests are the haunt of this rare antelope, and as the head was a fine one we cut it off and a Kikuyu carried it back to the car. Though we had secured a trophy, I felt regret that we had not reached the scene earlier and perhaps saved the life of the poor bongo.

The river widened where it made a sharp twist and enabled us to find a place to lunch, but beyond this pool the path completely disappeared and we again had to wade the river, feeling our way round huge boulders, the banks growing steeper till it became a deep narrow gorge with a sheet of perpendicular rock each side; the trees above, shutting out the sky, made it very dark and eerie. Here was a black-looking pool, and changing his fly to a spoon Hubert tried his luck, but the trout were wary. I was glad to leave that haunted gorge, splendid and terrible with its menacing presence of unseen elephants and other denizens of the wild, that in the vastness of the silent inscrutable forest made me a prey to unimagined fears. It was indeed time to return if we wished to reach the car before the sunset; in the dark our path through the forest would have been dangerous, not only because of its savage inhabitants, but also the rough walking would have been difficult. After much slipping and scrambling, not only in and by the river, but also up the almost perpendicular ascent to where we left the car, we at length, hot and breathless,



THE ABLDARES

Hubert contemplating what fly to use



THE ABERDARES

Hubert fishing a pool in Chirra River

JAMES LANDS A FIVE-POUND TROUT reached the top, to find that James, who had been fishing the pools in the native Reserve down the river, had secured a nice five-pounder. It was indeed a triumph.

After changing our wet shoes and stockings, that by now were almost dry again, and refreshing ourselves with barley-water and cake, we stowed ourselves, the bongo head and the trout into the car, and when, shortly after 9 p.m., we arrived home we ate the trout for dinner.

XX

THE UGANDA RAILWAY

I WRITE this from the balcony of Sir Ali Bin Salim's house at Mombasa, which, from its wooded heights looks on the lovely harbour. Last night, as I slept fitfully in the train that brought me from Nairobi I thought of the toll of life taken by lions when making this, the Kenya-Uganda Railway. Peeping out at a station, I saw written up the magic word "Tsavo," recalling to my mind stirring memories of the book¹ which thrilled so many readers some years ago with its tragic story of the battle waged between lions and men; for the former resented the invasion of their land and exacted a terrible penalty.

The lions, there were only two of them, devoured in all twenty-eight Indian coolies, in addition to scores of natives, before Colonel Patterson was able to put an end to their depredations. They evinced an almost unbelievable cunning. Perhaps one of the most sickening episodes was what befell a small Indian boy who was walking back to camp, along the permanent way, when he heard a movement in some bushes and to his terror saw a lion a short distance off. Flight was useless; there were no trees to climb, but on the edge of the permanent way was a zinc tank, with a small circular hole in the top.

¹ *The Man-eaters of Tsavo*, by Colonel Patterson.

A BOY'S ORDEAL WITH A LION

The child, with great presence of mind, made for the tank which was empty, and succeeded in squeezing his slender body through the aperture, and getting inside. The lion inserted a paw through the opening. The boy crouched at the bottom of the tank, where the paw just reached him; he had a box of matches with him, and with these he burnt the horrible paw when it was inserted.

When morning came the tank was found, bruised and battered, with the boy still inside comparatively unharmed by the lion, but insane from the terrors of the night. The tank had been turned over and over by the lion, and moved some considerable distance from the place where the boy had entered.

I am told the man-eaters have been exterminated, but only lately a lion jumped on to the corrugated roof of the Indian station-master's house at Simba, and tried to find a way in to the terrified man below. Luckily he did not succeed.

A party on safari started out to destroy the man-eater and hid themselves in some railway carriages on a siding. Tying up a bullock as bait, they waited with their rifles ready. When more than half the night had passed without incident, they gave up hope of seeing the lion and turned in to sleep. In the morning one of their party was missing . . . the lion had entered the carriage and carried the unfortunate man away without disturbing anyone.

The K.U.R., commonly called the Uganda Railway, has never known hurry. From its inception it has had to study patience, wearily waiting for steel girders and other things that never came. It has

learnt to wait. . . . The *South African Railway Magazine* has described it :

Never was there such a railway since the world began. . . . It starts from a wind-swept island in the blue Indian Ocean and it ends by the wooded shore of the largest lake in Africa. It passes through jungle, swamp and desert ; zig-zags across plains where elephant roam by day and lions roar by night ; corkscrews up the sides of outlandish snow-capped mountains ; circles round the base of volcanic cone-shaped hills ; meanders by the shambas and cultivated patches of rude inland tribes ; strikes athwart treacherous swamps, and ploughs through the darkness of primeval forests, until it emerges, calm and triumphant, from under the flat-topped mimosas by the shelving shores of the shimmering inland sea. . . . On its way it samples every climate ; touches every degree of temperature ; experiences every extreme. At Mombasa, on the low coast belt, the Swahili stoker leans gasping from his blistered engine-box ; later, at Limuru, in the frosty Highlands, he blows on his half-frozen fingers and stamps with numbed feet. None but a steel-skinned Swahili could stand the change and do his work and live.

Again the line climbs upward. Kenya, the second of the twin white breasts of Africa, shows on the horizon. . . . The great Rift Valley that scars the African continent with memorial of bygone volcanic conflict. . . . Timber forests, vast, gloomy and impenetrable. . . . On through the elephant country ; a strange unclad people without shame stare from the high grass.

The lands of the gentle Wakikuyu, of the war-like Masai, the treacherous Nandi, are left behind, and the line is in the low country by the lake where live the Kavirondo, almost alone among mankind in their disdain of clothing for their nakedness. . . .

When the last section of the railway was completed, including the bridge that spanned the head of the Nile at Jinja, it was decided that an official

GIRAFFE STOP THE TRAIN

opening ceremony should be arranged. On the appointed day the Governor and a brilliant company assembled to declare the bridge open ; but they did not allow for the unexpected which invariably occurs in Africa. . . . To their amazement and concern, they discovered, at the critical moment, that a number of lions had already taken possession of the bridge and had forestalled them by holding a function of their own. There was no possibility of an opening ceremony ; the lions pacing the bridge, occasionally stopping to sniff like the great cats they are, demonstrated in no uncertain fashion that the bridge was open to the general public, human and animal.

The train did not hurry itself for me. Once during the night we stopped where no station was visible ; it was a polite little train and was waiting for some giraffe to cross the line ; but I was told that a week ago, when a young rhino charged the engine, the train did not wait and the poor rhino suffered far worse than a headache.

On waking in the early morning I felt the close heat of this coast already descending and enfolding me in a stuffy embrace. We were travelling through groves of coco-nut palms, mangoes and papayas among which monkeys were rioting and swinging. Native huts were thickly sprinkled among the shambas, and the train continually drew up at little stations, presumably to enable the dusky crowd to greet their friends.

When we crossed the bridge that links the mainland with the island of Mombasa, I knew we had reached our destination. That urbane gentleman, Sir Ali Bin Salim, met me with his car at Mombasa station. He

is of the ruling house of Muscat in Arabia and owns a great deal of land both there and on this side of the Indian Ocean. His generosity is unbounded. Only lately he gave £80,000 to help the people on the coast whose crops had been destroyed by locusts, and he has never been known to refuse a genuine appeal.

Leaving the station we drove through the quaint old streets of the island city, till we reached the arm of the sea that forms the harbour of Kilindini. Kilindini means in Swahili "the place of deep waters," and it is here that the ocean-going steamers, *en route* from European ports to South Africa, berth and discharge their passengers and cargo. Before the deep-water facilities at Kilindini were established, all steamers calling there were forced to use lighters in mid-stream for loading and unloading, at much higher cost and at greater inconvenience. Kenya Colony is very fortunate in having such an amenity for the transport of its imports and particularly of its exports, as innumerable handling, involving additional cost, is dispensed with, apart from the considerable saving in time. This is the only port on the East African coast so favoured.

It was here we entered the motor-launch to cross to Sir Ali's estate on the mainland. Mounting some steep steps cut in the rocky cliff, we found ourselves on a large plateau on which were several buildings. These buildings, hewn out of the rock, included five houses some 50 yards apart, each house consisting of a large bedroom and bathroom, with a wide loggia. There was also a dining-room and a living-room surrounded by an immense balcony, so contrived that it caught every breeze and made a delightful lounge. These buildings were lit by electric light, and the two

huge candelabra in the living-room once hung in an imperial palace at Vienna. On the plateau a few mango trees gave shade. Beyond the house I occupied was a tangled grove of coco-nut palms, pawpaw trees, and mangoes.

It was very hot ; at midday the thermometer stood at 96, but the heat could not be gauged by a thermometer ; it was the heavy anæsthetizing heat that was an oppression. The long rains are soon expected which will cool the gasping earth. In the meantime the damp heat made me terribly sticky. I was glad I had left Toby at Kianzabe.

Though Mombasa is an island of dazzling beauty and colour, I longed for that other island in the North Sea, where, though one may sometimes sigh for the sun, and grumble at grey days, one never suffers a heat that is intolerable and from which there is no respite during the twenty-four hours of day and night.

There is also to my mind a sinister atmosphere hanging over Mombasa . . . one senses in the heavy air grim spectres of the past . . . the shadow of by-gone cruelties . . . of the ceaseless warfare and atrocities of centuries . . . the horror of the days when the terrified slaves were driven into the waiting galleys to convey them to their unknown destinations. Every nation trafficked in slavery, and large fortunes were amassed. It is said that the hymn, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds," was composed by a pious gentleman, while waiting for the sloop that was to bring him his consignment of tortured humanity.

The house on my left was occupied by an English couple, Commander and Mrs. Lawford, who are old

friends of Sir Ali, and are his guests for the moment. Commander Lawford is one of the early pioneers of East Africa and, besides speaking several of the native dialects, he understands and loves the land and the people where he lived for many years before the War as an Assistant District Commissioner.

After serving through the Great War, the Commander returned with his wife to this country and invested his money in a sisal plantation. It is now about 40 years since the first trial plants were brought from South America to Tanganyika by the Germans, and 10 years later the British introduced sisal to Kenya Colony. Sisal has been even a more insatiable monster than coffee in absorbing the settlers' capital, and has suffered to a considerably greater extent in the present depreciation of values which exists in the commodity markets of the world than most other raw materials. At its present price-level, little or no return can be obtained from the large investment of capital necessary to supply rope and twine manufacturers and others with their raw material. Commander Lawford is now looking for a job.

Once you are here there is no getting away and, to use his own words, "you are frozen in." The land may be cruel, but it fascinates and holds you fast. You cannot live away from the wild freedom, the great spaces and, above all, from the sunshine of this lovely land. It is to be hoped that the days are not far distant when a general recovery of produce markets will take place, and more remunerative prices will be obtained for the exports of the country. East Africa's financial burden, particularly the heavy interest charges on loans imposed on the country during more prosperous days, still continue, even during the

FISH DECOYS

depression, and no relief has been afforded to this part of the Empire, in spite of the cheap money rates now available. It is felt in some quarters that a considerable saving in administrative and overhead charges could be effected from an amalgamation of the three countries, Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, with the resultant unification of all major services,

Fishing is one of the chief industries and relaxations of Mombasa. Along the sea-shore are great fishing-screens of twigs and branches interwoven into a rude lattice-work and forming a double wall extending into the water. The space between the two walls is wide on the outside and narrow near the shore. The fish are driven into the wide mouth and up the constantly-narrowing funnel very much like wild duck at home are worked on a decoy pond, and the fish, like the duck, fall easy victims to the men waiting in the shallow water at the narrow end.

There are many varieties of large fish in the harbour which afford great sport to the fisherman, and I was told stories of grim tussles with the barracoute and the koli-koli, and many another inhabitant of the Indian Ocean. Koli-koli have been caught up to 60 pounds, and a record one was secured in 1915 that turned the scales at 90 pounds. For these fish tarpan tackle is required, and usually a live sardine for bait. At this time of year one is not encouraged to fish; the great heat and the glare from the water makes it dangerous for a European to participate in the sport, which was a great disappointment to me.

Terrible as is the moist heat of the early spring, Mombasa, after the long rains, cool and refreshed, is the Eldorado of Kenya Colony. In June and July, the youthful Britishers are sent to the huts on the

coast, and when possible their parents follow them, to recover from the strain to nerves and heart which invariably results from living too long a time 5,000 to 7,000 feet above sea-level. The Lawfords drove me through woods of palms, papaya trees and the many-rooted mangroves to see these little shanties on the edge of the Indian Ocean. They are simple huts, often without doors and windows, wide open to the sea front, for life is spent entirely out of doors and mostly in the sea—the coral reefs making bathing safe from sharks. When I visited these bandas they were unoccupied, and the bedsteads, chairs and tables folded up in a corner, and each hut had the name of its owner written up on a board outside. The view from these dwellings is charming and probably soothing to jaded nerves, watching the heavy seas breaking in foam over the coral reefs, the great ships gliding past the dangerous rocks into the safety of the harbour, and the Arab dhows sailing on the bluest of oceans. The tall waving palms hang over the beach and the golden mohair, with emerald-green foliage and orange-red flower, makes vivid splashes against the dark woods, while bougainvillea smothers all growth with starry blossom.

XXI

MOMBASA

MOMBASA is perhaps Africa's most soul-stirring gateway, through whose central channel, winding past the shallow coral reefs, have sailed adventurers from many lands since the beginning of history. Hindoos, Phoenicians, Persians, Greeks and Arabs have passed this way. In 1498 came the Portuguese, who occupied part of the littoral for over two centuries, with but few intermissions, while a war for supremacy was everlastingly waged between them and the Arabs. After their final defeat by the latter and expulsion from the country, they left no mark of their long occupation save a fortress and a few words of their language still preserved in one of the Bantu dialects, and the pine-apple which they introduced and which now grows in profusion in favoured parts of the country and is superior in flavour to anything I have tasted in Europe.

Now it is Great Britain who is launching her adventure through the ancient gateway, lifting a veil from vast tracts of country that until the middle of the nineteenth century were a complete blank, and expanding her civilization into the heart of the unknown.

It was the Imperial British East African Company who, in 1888, started their brave venture for the pur-

pose of establishing order in Uganda and the highlands of Kenya, with the understanding that the "heartly co-operation and support of Her Majesty's Government" should be accorded and a Royal Charter of Incorporation was granted them.

The Imperial Company soon found itself in financial difficulties, as the cost of consolidating British influence in the vast area was enormous, while a Liberal Government, with Gladstone at its head, was now in power and gave them no support or encouragement. When the Company ended its career in commercial failure and made way for a British Protectorate, it left such a splendid record of achievement, that it elucidated a tribute from Lord Salisbury when speaking on East African affairs in the House of Lords.

Great Britain has succeeded in abolishing the slave trade, which for long had held this land in thrall; it took eighty years to suppress this traffic, which she did, unaided by any other Western Power. As the result of circumstances arising from this work, Britain was forced to assume the protection over the country which she had previously refused, and in 1895 East Africa became British East Africa.

I spent the morning with my host, exploring the wonderful island town of Mombasa with its ancient fort, a relic of the days when the Portuguese held this coast; its buried city, beneath the present town; the custom house through whose doors passes much of the world's ivory; its fantastic coral cliffs and those curious trees with enormous sprawling trunks, the baobob trees, which, legend says, were already saplings in the days of King Solomon. The long coral reef out at sea makes the entry to the harbour a difficult one, as it proved when its sharp vertical edge was

WHEN THE MASAI ATTEMPTED A RAID scraped by Vasco de Gama's ship and the commander punished his pilot by dipping him in burning oil. Those old buccaneers had an unpleasant way of making their wrath felt.

One of the most charming spots on the island was the very efficient and airy two-storied hospital standing in a beautiful garden on a promontory overhanging the sea, where its inmates can enjoy the cool breezes of the Indian Ocean, also the lovely view.

The name "Mombasa" means the impregnable. The arms of the sea encircle the town, forming the twin harbours of Mombasa and Kilindini.

Sir Ali told us how a few years ago the Masai, who, as warriors and hunters, scorned to till the soil, thought to raid Mombasa. A number of them crossed the 300 miles of waterless and inhospitable veldt that divides them from the rich Mombasa lands, and on arriving at the shores of the isthmus that forms the island they rushed down to what appeared to be a river to slake their thirsts. The first man to drink threw up his arms, shouting the water was bewitched, and they all turned tail and fled at the thought of the dread witch doctor. Never had they seen or heard tell of the ocean.

The Masai own immense herds of cattle, of which over 200,000 are said to have perished during the drought of the last two years, but they refuse to sell, arguing with truth that they have no use for money. They trade with their beasts; a primitive form of barter that has survived the centuries, when six cows or twelve oxen will procure a wife. Their huts are built of grass; their scanty clothes are made of skin; time is their own, wherein to hunt or eat or sleep. Surely have they solved the problem of the simple

life. They are mighty hunters and fear not to attack a lion with their spears alone. They live on the milk of their herds, varied by flesh and blood, bleeding the cattle by opening a vein in the neck, the blood flowing into a gourd, and this they drink fresh, mixed with milk. When they have obtained sufficient blood they close up the tiny wound and the cattle do not appear to suffer any evil effects. Blood, as an article of food, may sound somewhat gruesome, but it is in reality a necessary adjunct to the food of the Masai, as it serves as a substitute for salt, which they do not possess. Till quite recently, they are said to have occasionally eaten their enemies killed in war to imbibe the courage of the dead warrior; but I think that is a myth, as Kenya has never possessed cannibals among her population, unless it was the Wakamba.

Once they ate no other food but meat. Now they often feed on maize, rice, banana and cereals which, in the old days, they considered only food for savages! They do not care to eat fish or the flesh of wild beasts, excepting buck. If they kill a buffalo, they use the hide for their shields, and from the horns, mortars are cut, in which medicines are ground for the use of the medicine men, as they name the witch doctors. In this tribe once no man could take his place in the warrior class or aspire to marriage till he had killed either a man or a lion. Since Great Britain took over the country the Masai have been unable to blood their spears in battle, and lion slaying has assumed an even greater importance than in the good old days when the lion was looked on as a sort of substitute for the human foe. The young men sally forth, armed with spears and shields, and the spears are thrown at fairly close quarters, generally with

deadly effect. The man whose spear first transfixes the lion and whose hand grasps the tip of the tail, has earned the right to the mane, the head-dress of the warrior. Occasionally the youths are severely mauled, but with their extraordinary vitality they recover from wounds that would be fatal to a European.

The original home of these warriors was in the great Rift Valley, but when the Uganda Railway came along, their grazing grounds were required by the settlers, and the Masai chiefs were interviewed and asked to go north to Laikipia, where they could remain for ever undisturbed, as it was only the land near the railway that was wanted. After some hesitation, they eventually acceded to the wishes of the Government and moved from their old traditional grazing grounds to what they considered a less inviting region, and a Treaty was signed in 1904.

The land allotted them by the Treaty had soon proved inadequate, and the boundaries were continually being extended, causing friction with the European stockholders and farmers with whom they came in contact. Neither Europeans nor Masai were content, and in 1912 another evacuation took place, the Masai moving to the immense Southern Reserve which they now occupy.

The Masai are a remarkable race, tall and slim, of magnificent carriage and fine features, and with a language that is second to none in beauty. They invariably impress those with whom they come in contact by the distinction of their bearing and the dignified courtesy they invariably display to armed authority, which is exceptional in a race that for centuries has held undisputed sway over the land, raiding its neighbours, and levying blackmail on all

who passed through its dominions. They are lords of creation, strong and virile, and utterly opposed to work or to trade. Their greeting, though well meant, is not attractive to a European, as spitting is a token of friendship and before advancing to shake hands, a Masai will expectorate into his palm. They are entirely a pastoral people. Their raiding proclivities are sometimes a source of trouble. They are the only tribe in Kenya who can be said to have a grievance. The Government report on them is illuminating. "Their bad qualities are their intense conservatism; the desire to live as their fathers lived; their dogged adherence to traditions and old customs." One prays that in the fullness of time they will not, like the American Indian, be doomed to extinction as a race, before the advancing tide of utilitarian western civilization.

The Kikuyu, on the contrary, is an agriculturist, but also a coward, and nobody in this country would choose him to carry a second rifle when after big game, as at the first sign of danger he will bolt for the nearest tree. He is also very lazy, and to avoid the trouble of cutting wood he will set a whole forest on fire, but from my experience some of them certainly make excellent servants. I could not wish for a better boy to look after me than Mwangi, but I do not imagine a Masai would ever have wished to eat a Kikuyu!

But of all the tribes in this country the Kavirando are perhaps the most amenable, with always a cheerful smile on their big black faces. Though many of them are clothed in little but that smile and a few beads, these pagans are Nature's gentlemen, with a very high standard of morality. They are honest,

THE KAVIRANDO

hard-working and dependable. Their home lies on the margins of the Great Lake where is now a young and rapidly-developing goldfield, which in the process of time may make of Britain's youngest colony her most precious jewel. It is said the Kavirando are dying out. Perhaps the same remedy might be given them that was applied with success to a tribe on the shores of Lake Rudolf which, through intermarriage, was decreasing to a few hundred individuals. As they were a brave tribe, once renowned for their courage and resource, the District Commissioner was worrying how to help them, when a mutiny broke out, and the King's African Rifles were sent to quell the disturbance. It is now some years since the event and the tribe have shown a marked increase in numbers and stamina.

The Kavirando are among the few tribes who bury their dead and show respect to the shades of their ancestors, and they often have a little door open at the back of their dwellings, to enable the spirit of the dead to come back—to save the departed from the loneliness of death. The little door at the back of the hut is never closed—it holds a welcome for the loved ghost.

Except for the very spasmodic and partial occupation of this coast by the Portuguese, the Arabs held the littoral and reigned for many centuries, cultivating vast plantations and exporting on a large scale their grain and produce. They had brought with them their own civilization and planned and layed out towns, erecting mosques and palaces that were gems of architecture; schools, hospitals, and universities,

that won fame beyond the seas, as seats of learning. Among these old cities was Lamu, perhaps the loveliest jewel of the cities on the coast.

But the abolition of slavery hit the Arabs, perhaps, even harder than it hit the Americans of the Southern States, and cruelty could never be laid at their door, for their treatment of slaves was always just and merciful. Bereft of their slaves they were left without labour, and great areas of cultivated land reverted to desert, ruining the owners. To-day the palaces, once owned by sultans, great soldiers and statesmen, are empty ; their descendants living in proud retirement in the rooms on the ground floor that once housed their slaves, the upper floors having fallen in. Their splendour is a thing of the past ; it is now difficult for them to live. Their furniture and lovely tiles, their rare potteries, doors and windows, carved in arabesque designs, have been sold, and replaced by things modern and cheap. The ladies try to obtain work. With their slender fingers they do fine embroidery, but it is sweated labour and there is little demand for it. They have long ago sold their jewels and gold ornaments. A few of the men have obtained positions in offices ; some eke out a precarious livelihood plaiting coarse matting strips for carpets ; again sweated labour. Manual work on plantations, in competition with natives, who are probably the offspring of their slaves in the long ago, is impossible to these proud descendants of Arab conquerors. Yet the old Arab courtesy has survived their humiliations and they will welcome a visitor with the best they have to offer ; coffee, if they happen to possess it, will be given you in a cracked cup of cheap Japanese design. If you feel sympathy, and it is almost im-

A FAMOUS SULTAN

possible not to do so, you must not express it. The innate pride and sensitiveness of a great race yet remains triumphant in misfortune. It is the will of Allah. "Allah Kareem."¹

It was towards the end of the seventeenth century when the Arabs broke into the stronghold of Fort Jesus and put the Portuguese garrison to the sword, after a siege lasting over three years. The fort was thought impregnable till the Arab warriors from the Persian Gulf swarmed its ramparts, exacting a terrible penalty from the defenders for the long years of cruelty and oppression that the country and their co-religionists had suffered, and smashing the power of Portugal for all time on the shores of the Indian Ocean.

While the Oman Arabs held sway in the land the famous Sultan, Seyyid Said, transferred his throne from Oman to Zanzibar. This far-seeing sultan laid the foundations of Zanzibar's prosperity by insisting on the cultivation of the clove, which was introduced at the end of the eighteenth century.

Seyyid Said was a distinguished diplomatist, a great sailor, a brave soldier and withal highly religious. At his death his dominions included the whole of Oman in Arabia, certain islands in the Persian Gulf, and the coast of Africa from Guardafui to Cape Dalgado, with the exception of Lamu, a distance of 960 miles. His sway was acknowledged in the interior from the Coast to the Great Lakes. He conceived the idea of a series of trading stations, starting on the Coast opposite Zanzibar to end in the Congo.

¹ The above was inspired by a very interesting article in the *East African Standard*, asking help for the unfortunate ladies of Lamu.

M O M B A S A

This man by his own strength of character built up an Empire which any power might have envied. Had he been better served, this Empire might have survived till to-day. . . . It may be said that it is owing to Seyyid Said that Zanzibar to-day still has its own Sultan and its own Flag.¹

At his death, Europe stretched out greedy hands to seize his possessions, and the partition of his kingdom on the mainland was the result. When a treaty with the Zanzibar potentate had been concluded, the Imperial British East African Company started their campaign of commercial administration and expansion, not only on the coast, but to the remote boundaries of Uganda.

When financial troubles and difficulties hampered them, Great Britain took over the administration of the country and after two years declared a Protectorate in Uganda and the Highlands of the interior, to be followed in 1893, by agreement with the Sultan, of a Protectorate over his coastal dominions.

Zanzibar's contributions to the War were, for her size, by no means negligible. Besides the formation of a European Defence Force and the enlistment of many natives in the King's African Rifles, some thousands of carriers under the Native Carrier Recruitment Decree of 1916 were recruited, and the sum of £70,000 was contributed to the Imperial Government as an aid to the carrying on of the War. In addition £245,000 was invested in War Loan and £19,500 raised by public subscriptions for the British Red Cross Society. It was mainly the Sultan's steadying influence, not only over his own subjects, but over the Moslem populations of East and Central Africa, that contributed to the maintenance of peace among the

¹ *Zanzibar*, by W. H. Ingram.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE ARAB

Mohammedans of Mid-Africa during the critical period of war in these regions.

Law and order has succeeded those years of incessant strife and the memory of the great days when independent Sultanates studded the coast for a thousand miles each side of the Equator, lives only in the hearts of the Arabs, the last living reminders of the years of their glory.

Hidden too, in crumbling palaces and ruined mosques, in buried cities and broken fortresses, is the history of their former wealth and culture, which time, aided by the tropical growth of great trees, dense bush, and the jungle creepers, have combined together to bury deep from the incurious eyes of the present generation. The forests have woven a shroud of greenery over their memory.

XXII

KARURA

I HAD hoped to break my journey back from Mombasa at Kuhima Kiu, near Ulu, where the Joyces had very kindly offered to put me up, and show me a country which is, I am told, totally different to anything I have yet seen. As they were away from home for a few days, and as I could not stand the damp heat of Mombasa, I made up my mind to return to Nairobi for a day or two, till the Joyces were ready to receive me. I was sorry to part from my host, who to me appeared a very wise philosopher. He had an air of gentle dignity that imparted a feeling of peace and serenity. It was a pleasure to sit on the balcony *in the evenings when the sun went down and the breeze rose from the east in a little whisper*; to listen to his tales of the country; to live in that atmosphere of quiet content, so far removed from the modern hurrying world. Through the arches one glimpsed the sea shrouded in a sort of luminous haze. There was a sense of repose and languid charm—the indolent peace that comes after the throbbing heat of the day. The night descended with tropical suddenness; the calm sea grew an oily black, in which the great stars were reflected as in a mirror, and the lights of the harbour were shining columns in the water—the palms gained a new and mysterious beauty—the

A WARM JOURNEY

wonder of the night held me entranced. But again, when morning came, after tossing sleeplessly through the hot night under the mosquito net, when it was agony to put on one's clothes and even worse to try to take them off, as they clung fast, one felt oneself just one huge drip ; one longed for the Kenya Highlands.

Knowing that the train would, in the course of fifteen hours, carry me up some 5,000 feet to those cool heights, I found courage to enter the sleeping-car at four o'clock one grilling afternoon, and can only describe the first few hours as an inferno. On waking the next morning, I felt the cool, invigorating breeze of the Uplands, and I stepped out of the train in happy mood, to drive to the Muthaiga Club, where I engaged a bedroom and had a bath. No one knew of my arrival, as letters and even telegrams do not hurry themselves, so why bother? I telephoned to ask Bunny Thomson if I might come out to lunch at her charming place some miles outside the town, and she answered that she would come herself to fetch me, and invited me to stay the night, which invitation I accepted with pleasure.

One of the charms of this land is the hospitality shown the stranger. There is a spirit of good fellowship among the dwellers in this new young country and one feels one is always adding to one's list of friends.

Repacking my portmanteau, and wiring to the Joyces the time of my arrival next day, I set off to Karura, which is situated in open park-like land in the heart of a wooded country through which runs a river. The house is quite delightful ; it is one of the oldest in the colony, and is most luxuriously

fitted with every comfort and convenience, while each bedroom has its own bathroom. Grass lawns surround it, studded with clumps of tall delphiniums, phloxes and other flowers, while at one corner stands a colossal fig-tree, appearing in the distance, with its silver trunk, rather like a great beech. The kitchen-garden, laid out like an English one, is surrounded by a hedge and has wide herbaceous borders running each side of the central path. But the great charm of Karura is the remnant of the primeval forest that once covered the country and whose woods are within a few hundred yards of the house.

Besides the coffee plantations, there are many cattle on this estate, and as it adjoins Alan Tarlton's game reserve, a lion occasionally pays a visit to the farm, a delicate attention which is not always appreciated, and the cattle are carefully collected into a thorn boma each night for safety.

After tea we sauntered out to the woods where we saw some baboons who were swinging in the branches of the big forest trees. Bunny began to feel rather nervous at their close proximity, as she had with her two favourite dogs, who would without doubt be attacked by the baboons if they wandered too far from her side, as baboons, like leopards, show no mercy to dogs. But the sun was setting, it was also dangerous for us to remain in the forest and we wended our way back to the house. I always resent having to curtail my evening stroll, as that is the only time, save early morning, when one can venture out without a sun hat and enjoy the coolness and scents of the breeze that comes with the night.

Splendid as is the equable climate of the Kenya Highlands, one cannot entirely escape the drawbacks

THE EQUATOR HAS ITS DRAWBACKS

of living on the Equator, the deadly monotony of a country where there is no twilight; where the sun for ever sets at 6.30, giving little time to enjoy the cool of evening. When the work of the day is over and the worker wishes to play a game of tennis or golf, the sudden darkness that follows the sunset obliges him to return to the house, where he has to kill time, perhaps having a chat and a drink with a neighbour if he is lucky enough to possess one. Although white men and women can live and seemingly enjoy good health in Kenya, no land can truly be called a white man's country where the sun is regarded as a danger; not to be enjoyed, but to be evaded from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. every day, year in, year out, and where also the ever-present danger of malaria prevails.

PART IV

KUHIMU KIU—KILIMANJARO—THE HAPPY MOUNTAIN—
KAPSILIAT—LEAVING KENYA—GOLDFIELDS—RETURN
TO EUROPE

XXIII

KUHIMU KIU

A GAIN I am in the train, this time on my way to Kuhuimu Kiu, and at 6.15 p.m. I alighted at the small station of Konza, where Frank Joyce met me with his motor. I found myself in a vast plain with hills slipping into the distance. To the south was the Game Reserve which reached to the borders of Tanganyika and stretched from the Tsavo River on the east, to the Kedong Valley on the west; a huge expanse, giving sanctuary to Africa's wild creatures, where they can roam at large ignoring the existence of men.

We travelled north towards a range of mountains and passed many antelope, kongoni, zebra, wildebeest and a few giraffe, who viewed us from their lofty height with proud disdain. Here no rain had fallen. The wells were dry and everything had a parched look.

We were steadily climbing, and it was by the starlight that we arrived in front of a long, low red-brick house with a deep veranda where I was greeted by my hostess and her daughter, Ann. It was altogether charming and I was soon made to feel at home. Here there was no fear of leopards. We slept with our doors and windows open, and two Irish setters peacefully spent the night on the veranda.

Next morning, in the early sunshine and mountain air, I felt once more how good it was to be alive. We were now 6,000 feet above sea-level. The vast rolling plain and the Bush country, the ideal home of lion and rhino, spread itself to the distant mountains and to me was far more like the Africa of my dreams, than was the cultivated region of coffee, of sisal or maize round Thika.

Kilimanjaro was faintly visible, that stupendous mountain with its cap of ice, and the Mua Hills where the virgin forest is being torn from its age-long sleep, and replaced by stock-farms and grazing. One felt Africa calling.

This estate of 15,000 acres of undulating pasture, of prairie and mountain, is a great dairy farm, containing roughly a thousand head of cattle and always 400 cows in milk. The milk is pasteurized and sent off by ox-drawn wagons to Konza to catch the train to Nairobi, where there is always a demand for this excellent milk. But grass is getting scarce, the country is parched and still no sign of rain. In the native Reserve the people are hungry, the cattle are dying. Everywhere the question is asked, "Are the rains again going to fail?" If so, it spells disaster, famine, and ruin to many a settler; and always one lives on hope, and I am full of admiration for the pluck, endurance and cheerful courage displayed.

Hubert and Toby joined us at lunch time; they had motored from Kianzabe, a distance of 70 miles across the Athi plains and the Mua Hills, and report having found a dead zebra, which a Wakamba had just shot with a poisoned arrow. The youth made no attempt at concealment, and Frank Joyce told us that, in view of the famine, he encouraged the natives

LIONS JUMP INTO A BOMA

on his property to shoot zebra for food. They cut out the poisoned meat and the rest made excellent eating to their black palates.

Game also provided us with lunch, and among other good things were kongoni steaks, served with red-currant sauce.

The walls of the dining-room were decorated with the heads of lion, leopard and various antelope, all shot on the estate. Our host has himself accounted for over fifty lions. It is now two years since they showed themselves on this farm. Though the oxen were enclosed in a boma for the night, the lions jumped it and killed eleven of them before Frank and his manager arrived on the scene, when they accounted for three of the five brutes, and the lesson appears to have been taken to heart by the lions.

I think lions must be lacking in imagination, for when they have made a kill they will eat what they require and sit round the carcass all night to keep away other beasts of prey. Yet when daylight comes they return to the Bush, as is the custom of all big game since they learned to fear the white man's rifle. In the evening, on returning to finish their meal, they often find nothing but whitened bones. They have forgotten the vultures, who in the meantime have picked the carcass clean.

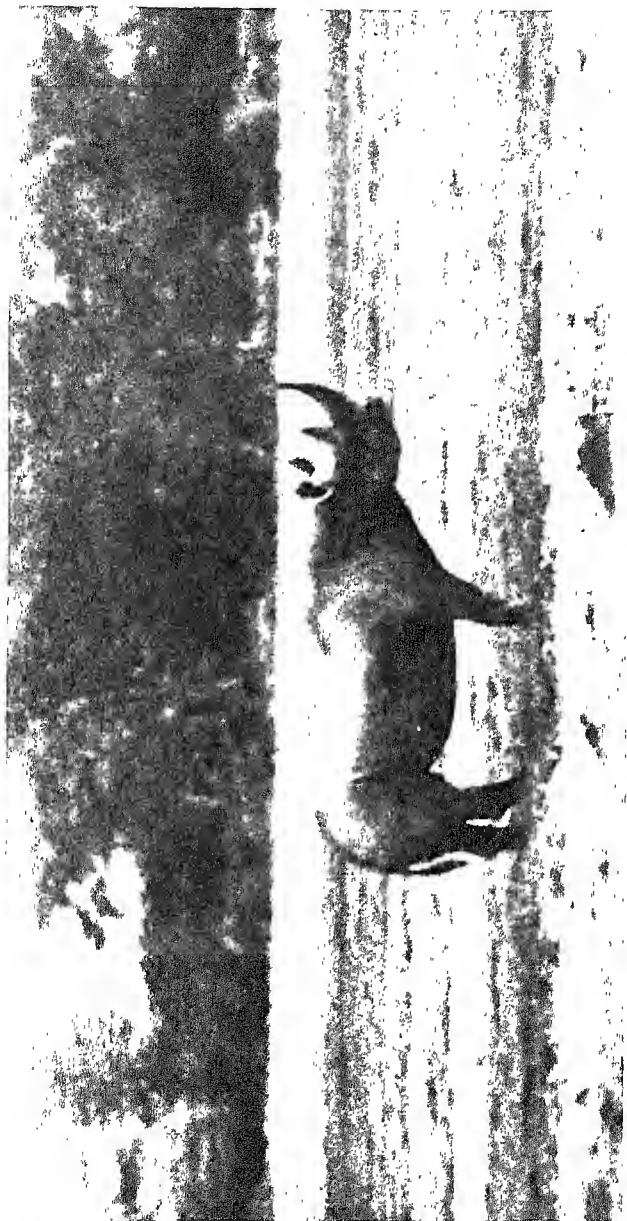
In the afternoon we visited the Game Reserve in the hope of seeing some of the great beasts. We entered an undulating country, thickly wooded with thorn and acacias of various sorts, many of them festooned with the pendant grass nests of the weaver finches, and as these birds always nest in colonies, the branches look as if they carried a heavy crop of large pears. After disturbing some antelope, both Tom-

mies and Grants, we pulled up on a small rise and with our glasses searched the Bush around. We were expecting to see lion, and certainly rhino, but the springs had dried up and the game had wandered on, probably to the Tsavo River. All was silent, not a leaf stirred. I asked my host what he would do if we suddenly met a rhino face to face, and he answered that he would at once turn the car to windward off the track, and the chances are the rhino would go on as he hunts entirely by scent. His eyesight being very feeble, his half-blind rushes are directed to a taint in the air and it is quite likely that the brute will lumber on for miles, probably wondering what it is all about! With his absurd tail up, and snorting like a steam engine, he rushes about as if wishing to exterminate you, while he probably is only trying to locate you, so that he may run the other way. To-day we were in no danger, as the only animals we saw besides antelope, were some of the Masai cattle which feed on the Reserve, for it is understood the Masai only kill a lion if he attacks the herds.

But famine has stalked the land and the awful stench of the dead cattle drove us away. Later we heard that the whole Reserve is one ghastly shambles, strewn with the carcasses of the Masai herds, victims of the drought.

Though we were disappointed at not seeing the larger game, we had a most beautiful drive back over the hills, the sunset tinging the snows on Kilimanjaro to a delicate rose which was reflected in the plain below.

On our return to the house we were greeted with the astounding news, that a few miles away some elephants had wandered on to the farm. As it was



A RHINO SNIFFING FOR SCENT OF DANGER

A FAMILY PARTY

too dark to pursue them we left them undisturbed, in the hope of seeing them next day, though it seemed unlikely. This is not elephant country and the great beasts must have wandered many miles from their usual haunts.

Restraining our impatience, daybreak the following morning saw us in the car, motoring in the direction where we hoped to find the elephants. Making use of our glasses, we at length distinguished their grey bodies standing motionless in some long grass. As they were some way off, we left the car, and taking advantage of the cover of some thorns, we approached to within about 50 yards, trusting the breeze would not give us away. As usual, their internal organs were loudly rumbling. Elephants must be for ever digesting. A big bull, two cows and a little calf made a delightful family party, recalling to my mind Neumann's graphic account of a flirtation he once witnessed. "The bull fondled his mate with his trunk and then, standing side by side, they crossed trunks and put the tips into each other's mouths in an undoubted elephantine kiss."

The Wakamba were anxious for elephant meat, and were imploring Frank to use his heavy rifle, while they were prepared to help with their spears and poisoned arrows. I was glad when he refused to disturb those splendid beasts, who seemed to scent danger, and were showing signs of restlessness. Ordering the natives away, we slipped back to the car and later in the day we heard the elephants had departed. The only damage done was to the fencing, which they had walked through, seemingly unconscious of the strong barbed wire.

Many years ago that famous hunter and explorer, Sir Samuel Baker, wrote of the elephant :

The King of Beasts is generally acknowledged to be the lion, but no one who has seen a wild elephant can doubt for a moment that the title belongs to him in his own right. Lord of all created animals in might and sagacity, the elephant roams through his native forest. . . . From place to place he stalks majestically at break of day, monarch of all he surveys.

In the Joyces' stable were some very beautiful riding ponies, both Somali and Arab, and every morning before breakfast they were ridden round the farm. Mary Early, the delicious name of my hostess, who hails from Virginia, offered me her favourite mare, and I never enjoyed a ride more than when, mounted on that perfect animal, we sallied out in the freshness of the dawn. We galloped over the short, close grass, now grey from drought, till we arrived at a field being broken up for wheat. Natives were handling the queer plough of the country, to which were yoked sixteen oxen, who with their humps, and long horns, combined to make a very Biblical picture, only the natives wore fewer garments than one usually associates with the Old Testament.

We then proceeded to inspect a reservoir that Frank Joyce was scooping for the use of the Wakamba cattle when the rains come. This reservoir was being hollowed out by a huge scooper, that oxen were working round and round, throwing out the soil to dam the edge. Frank is also feeding his Wakamba squatters, numbering about four hundred, with maize at cost price that he obtains from Nairobi. I believe he is popular, but a native never expresses

WE SEE A KUDU

gratitude, which quality is evidently a product of civilization.

In the afternoon we motored to the hills behind the house through lovely wooded country, and eventually entered a rocky defile where the road lost itself in a rough track that proved impracticable for the long-suffering motor. We had left all plant life behind. Around us were arid peaks and stony precipices. Hoping to get a view of the sunset we clambered up the steep side of a rocky escarpment; we turned a corner and, standing within 40 yards of us, was a kudu! He looked magnificent, perched motionless against the mountain background while he gazed at us with startled eyes. It is possible we were the first humans he had ever encountered and he evidently did not trust us, for with a sudden spring he vanished over the precipice, and I shuddered to think of that beautiful beast lying smashed at the bottom.

We crept to the edge, and far below us we saw the kudu leaping down the apparently sheer wall of rock, hitting back occasionally with his hind feet, till he reached the base, and still galloping in great bounds, a vision of savage grace, he vanished from our sight.

It was with some difficulty we turned the car to descend the wild mountain track to the plains. On emerging from the hills we caught a brief glimpse of the sunset, and again we saw Kilimanjaro, its snows floating in the heavens like an enchanted island of silver.

Next morning the sunshine failed to greet us on waking. The skies were dark and rain was falling

on the distant Mua Hills. Our excitement was tremendous. If it was too early in the year for the long rains, a few inches now would help the grass and possibly save acres of wheat and maize. Would the rain sweep across the plain to these hills and bring succour to the farm? Would it cross to the Masai Reserve and save the wretched cattle that still wandered, spectral skeletons on that arid veldt?

Before bidding farewell to our charming hosts, we fixed the chains on the car's tyres, as experience had taught us how wellnigh impassable are the roads in wet weather and we knew we must meet the rain in the Mua Hills.

We were within a few miles of Machakos before the storm broke, and at once we found ourselves skidding in a red sea of mud; slipping into the ditch one side of the road or mounting the bank on the other, recalling to memory our night of horror on the Kenya Mountain when returning from Marsabit. Without our chains I imagine we would have circled back to Kuhimu Kiu.

To add to our embarrassment we saw a lorry coming towards us, performing the same antics as our car, and as brakes were useless, it was on the knees of the gods whether we collided! As it approached us, the lorry slithered gracefully into the ditch and we slipped past with both near wheels on the bank. It was a miracle we did not capsize; the lorry was hopelessly stuck, so we took the driver, an Englishman, back to Machakos.

The rain, which had been very violent, now ceased, and on leaving Machakos to climb the Mua Hills we found the road comparatively dry and we had no further trouble till we reached the Athi plains,

where, when we neared the Matangulu Hills, we found it almost impossible to see the track, as a great deal of the country was under water. Luckily the ground was hard bottom and we arrived at Kianzabe in the afternoon, to find that over two inches of rain had fallen and many of the coffee trees were in flower.

We woke next morning to a thick white fog, the sun, the mountains, the landscape, completely blotted out; every now and then came a heavy shower of rain, lasting perhaps ten minutes. Hubert was delighted; he could not have too much rain for his coffee crop; he had stripped so many of the berries and most of his trees were due to flower.

We lit a fire in the big open fireplace of the living-room and turned away from the gloom outside. There is something terribly depressing about an African landscape when the sun is hidden in fog; it is like a human face without expression; it is dead.

You feel yourself a prisoner; your car cannot function on the roads; walking is impossible. After two years of drought the weather had broken. A month before the long rains were due, this rain had come to save the crops.

Next day the sun shone from a cloudless sky and we looked on a new green world. It seemed impossible that two days of rain could so alter the face of nature; the hills were a rich emerald and most of the coffee bushes were a mass of white flower that covered the length of their branches like frosted snow. Many wild flowers appeared and countless aromatic shrubs were decking themselves in blossom.

Beyond the dam, which was now a lake, on the

far side of the coffee shambas, and in the MacMaster's garden, new flowers were feeling their way to life. *Bignonia purpurea* hung long ropes of purple bloom round the tree branches, and like the golden rain, whose cousin it is, its splendour held one breathless. Among the *bougainvillias* Mrs. Butt made all her rivals dim, while *petrea volubilis* trailed its glorious blue, star-like flowers against the wall. The scent was intoxicating and in our hearts was the joy of knowing that the rain, which had been general, had saved countless farmers and planters, white men and black, from disaster.

XXIV

WILD LIFE NEAR NAIROBI

YESTERDAY afternoon, while on a visit to Karura, Bunny Thomson and I drove over to Ndururumo, hoping to see the lions. As the sun was setting, Alan Tarlton, accompanied by his uncle, each armed with a rifle, motored us across the plains on which were many variety of antelope to the tall grass near the swamp, which harbours both lion and buffalo. As we drove along, numbers of zebra stopped in their grazing to stare, and Thomson's gazelle skipped away, then turned to gaze at us with eyes alert. Some ostriches spread themselves out to run, but none showed any real alarm as long as we continued moving.

We bumped on over the plain, passing herds of lovely impala, also wildebeest and a wart-hog scuttled from under a bush, while in the distance we spied a stately eland. It was difficult to believe that this corner of the Athi plain teeming with wild life was barely 10 miles from Nairobi.

On nearing the swamp, which extends for many miles, I was rather surprised to see some kongoni feeding in the neighbourhood of their dreaded foes. Evidently the lions had made their kill the previous night, and these animals knew that for a day or two they were safe.

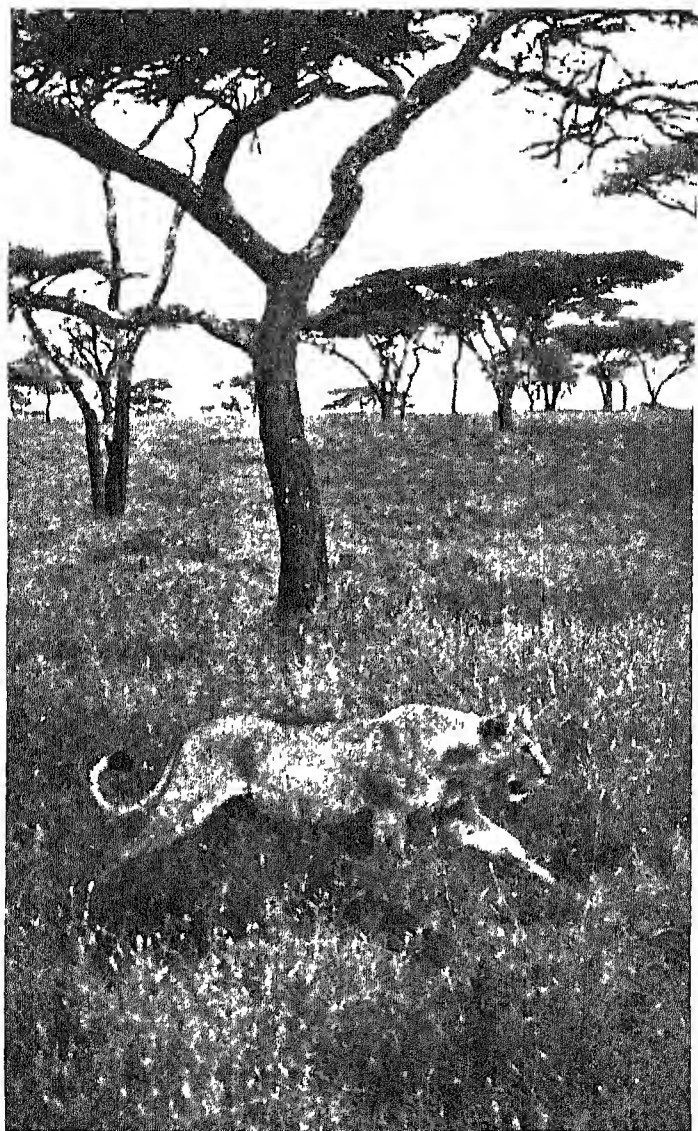
I remember one evening, on the Yatta plains, watching a large herd of impala quietly feeding on

the yellow grass. Not far off a rhino lay dozing in the shade of some thorns. All seemed peaceful, when, to our horror, we saw a lioness come out of the long grass and steal silently towards the antelope. No quarry can catch an impala if he is on the alert ; his immense bounds carry him easily out of the reach of his enemies, but the herd seemed unaware of the presence of danger and we waited for the tragedy that seemed inevitable—the lioness slipped her way past the incurious antelope and vanished into the Bush.

Finding the kongoni so unperturbed boded ill for our chances of seeing lion, but we drew the car up on the summit of a small hill and with our glasses searched the swamp ; there we saw a great tawny head raised to look at us. A. T. said it was a lioness who he believed had cubs in the papyrus grass. After a time she lowered her head, evidently satisfied that we meant no harm.

We started the engine and were about to leave when three lions appeared some 250 yards ahead of us. Curiosity brought them another 50 yards nearer, and I must confess that my heart was thumping badly, and I was thankful when they stopped. We could just see their heads and the outline of their backs in the tall grass. Not wishing to alarm them, we drove away and made a long circle before again approaching them, when we got a splendid view of a fine tawny-maned lion and two lionesses. They were magnificent animals, with the muscles rippling beneath their golden skins, the embodiment of grace and strength.

One of the females looked anything but playful ; she kept shooting her tail straight into the air, which is the usual indication that the beast is contemplating a charge. I think it was to stop her springing, that



A LIONESS ON YATTA PLAINS

A.T. threw her his hat. Anyhow, it had the desired effect, and we went our way unmolested. A.T. would only shoot as a last resort, as he does not wish to make the lions savage. Only once in these many years has he been forced to use his rifle when a lioness sprang at the car and he shot her dead as she charged. On examination he found she had been wounded by some person unknown; one of her four feet was shattered and the pain she must have endured no doubt accounted for her ferocity.

There is no doubt that lions are often passed unconsciously at very close quarters; they take advantage of any small hollow or depression to hide in, and I am told that they can curl themselves under cover that appears insufficient to hide a domestic cat.

The wanton cruelty that urges certain individuals to fire indiscriminately at game is detestable to all sportsmen. Mr. Cherry Kearton quotes from the *Field* newspaper that "on a certain morning on the Athi plains in 1921, two Englishmen came upon two wounded eland. They were lying not far from each other and a short distance away M. — was cutting up a third eland. The Englishmen questioned him about the wounded animals and in reply he told them that he particularly did not want to kill them before evening, as he wanted to drive them in front of his car, so as to be able to take photographs of them. One of the Englishmen accordingly went back and shot the two eland himself."

Kenya Colony is the last great stronghold of game, where in the game Reserves they can yet roam amidst their natural surroundings, living creatures enjoying their right to live unmolested by their dreaded enemy, the man with a rifle, and possessed of no imagination.

XXV

FLYING OVER KILIMANJARO

I WAS now getting used to Kenya as the land of contrasts and of the unexpected. It was, therefore, no very great surprise to me to learn that the efficient air-feeder service which links up Nairobi with the coast and the outlying districts of East Africa was in the hands of a very remarkable woman, Mrs. Wilson. This lady, herself an intrepid air woman, who has flown across Africa from east to west, and from north to south, has established an air service which has done more to open up the outlying areas, particularly the goldfields, than any other individual. Her courage is the admiration of all.

When, therefore, I decided to take a very quick trip down into Tanganyika from Nairobi I appreciated more than ever her stout pioneer effort which had made this possible, particularly as I realized that great difficulties must have been encountered. I also knew how long and comparatively uncomfortable such a journey would prove to be, if one had to resort to other means of travel.

We left for the aerodrome before the dawn had broken, and were forced to drive very slowly, and carefully, in order to avoid the masses of game which frequent the surrounding country bordering the

roads leading to the aerodrome. I believe I am right when I state that the Nairobi aerodrome is the only one where it has been necessary to enclose it in a deep trench and barricade it against zebra and the various animals that come to feed on the plains here. On arrival we found the small Puss Moth waiting to take us to the little-known port of Tanga, where we were due to arrive about four hours later. We flew over vast masses of game on our journey southwards, which became almost indiscernible as we slowly climbed higher into the heavens. Looking ahead, Kilimanjaro loomed into view, surrounded by the beautiful white clouds which always nestle so close to her bosom from morn till sunset, often obscuring the snow-cap of her summit. As we approached, I noticed the altimeter of our tiny plane indicated we were flying at 10,000 feet and we soon found ourselves completely enveloped in what seemed at first to be impenetrable clouds. Rising still higher, until we were flying at nearly 12,000 feet, we emerged above the cloud bank which had now completely obliterated all sign of the earth beneath us. My astonishment and surprise can hardly be described at the wonderful picture which suddenly laid itself bare before our eyes. I was so awed at the beauty of the scene that I found it impossible even to voice my appreciation and could only absorb its wonder in silent amazement. The marvellous glory of the gorgeous billowy white clouds below, which appeared like a snow-field over which fairies and mythical beings had scampered and romped, leaving their eerie traces behind in the weird-shaped clouds amassed beneath and the perfect azure of the sky with the

sun shining brilliantly from above, gave me the illusion that I was in fairyland itself.

Kilimanjaro, rising majestically like a sentinel, appeared on our right, as though to watch over us in our ethereal surroundings and one could very clearly see the glaciers and rivers which had escaped from the snows capping her summit. In a moment of enthusiasm Toby could not resist the opportunity of endeavouring to obtain a snapshot of such a wonderful and awe-inspiring sight. As, however, it was only possible for him to do so through the mica screen forming the windows of our 'plane, the pilot very generously offered to take pictures through the open window near him; I was immensely relieved when this was completed and he was once more in full charge of the controls.

Descending from our paradise in the blue and leaving behind a scene, the beauty and wonder of which I shall never forget, we find ourselves flying over Lake Jipè with Taveta beyond. It was here, on the borderland of Tanganyika and Kenya, that fierce fighting took place during the War. The Germans had established outposts, from which they raided the Kenya and Uganda Railway; the large and well-kept cemetery which exists there to-day bears ample evidence of the severe battles which took place in this part of East Africa. The official history has yet to be written, and much yet to be placed on record, but from friends of mine who took part in the campaign, I understand it was mostly a case of ambush, raid and counter-raid, dreadful rains, acute malaria and septic wounds; in fact they had to live up to all the horrors of what the text-books describe as "savage warfare." The

BATTLEFIELDS

troops taking part in the campaign were Britons drawn almost entirely from the Kenya settlers, many of whom abandoned their farms at the first call and left them, when they could, in the hands of their wives who carried on so gallantly whilst the men fought. The legion of Frontiersmen, veterans of the British and Colonial armies, under the splendid leadership of Colonel Driscoll, were in every battle and skirmish and were almost wiped out during the campaign. One hopes that the day will arrive when their story will be written, an Epic of the War of which the British Empire can indeed be proud. The fighting in East Africa cost us over 50,000 lives in battle, and many times that amount in disease. Add to this list the black carriers who were drafted into the white man's bloody game and who died in uncounted thousands.

Indian troops were also engaged in these operations, as also were the South African units, a fine body of men containing in their ranks some very excellent trekkers and snipers. The story is told that on one occasion these combined units found themselves under the command of an Indian Army General of the good old death and glory type, and at the engagement they were badly handled by the Germans and turned back. Some South African troopers were found later many miles behind the lines by (I believe) General Smuts, who upbraided them for running away from the Germans. They indignantly replied that they were not running away from the Germans but from the English General who was commanding them!

An outstanding figure of the war in East Africa was the German General Von Lettow Vorback, who

showed himself a brilliant and resourceful commander and a gallant foe who always played the war game strictly according to rule.

For four years he faced an Allied Front of eight different countries and a blockading Fleet; while fresh troops and munitions were weekly replacing the British losses. He succeeded in averting disaster or capture, and when the Armistice came, he was still undefeated, and his small force intact.

Below us was Saleita, the hill which standing out from the spreading veldt, was the tragic scene of a military coup effected by the Germans. This hill was a very important military position, and was occupied and well fortified by the Germans. The British force had been moved up in the direction of Saleita with the intention of dislodging the Germans. This plan was known to the latter and they adopted a somewhat simple but dreadful ruse. A dummy trench was dug half-way up the hill and was manned by just a skeleton German force. Actually the real defences were at the foot of the hill, where immense fortifications, made by conscripted native labour, had been thrown out. These fortifications were manned with the best fighting troops the Germans had, and most of their machine guns were dug in here. The battle opened with a ponderous firing of British heavy guns on to the dummy German trench, and after a while the decoy party in the dummy trench were seen to be scattering and retreating. This was the signal for a general attack by the British troops, who moved right across the open plain in the best Salisbury Plain tradition. The Germans allowed the advance to continue and held their fire until our troops were within very

short distance; they then decimated most of the advancing lines, inflicting very heavy casualties amongst our men. The composite units withered before the terrific fire imposed on them, and broke up into smaller units, to eventually retire in some confusion. Thus ended one of the reverses which perhaps was only second to the reverse inflicted on our troops in the misguided Tanga battle. Later on, after the remnants of the attacking force had been reinforced, General Smuts brought off a brilliant attack and captured the hill of Saleita and thus opened the way to what was German East Africa. What was then a hostile battle-field has, under British rule, become a prosperous and industrious country. Tanganyika Territory, as German East Africa is now known, is held under a Mandate vested in Great Britain; a considerable amount of British capital has been put into this country. It has rich plantations and gold mines and a contented and happy native population. The British administration is popular with the natives, who now get justice and are quite contented. Large hospitals have been built where natives are treated according to the most up-to-date medical science, roads have been opened up throughout the country, there is no unemployment amongst the natives, and the country itself is absolutely free, as far as I could gather, from political agitators, though, naturally, there is a feeling amongst the Britishers in Kenya, as well as in Tanganyika, that these two countries together with Ugandashould be put together as one administrative unit under a Governor-General. It is to be hoped that this will be done and that a real live administrator will be selected for the task.

Not many miles west of Tanga are the Grand Pangani Falls, where the Pangani River, which takes its rise from the Kilimanjaro eternal snows, dashes 300 feet over the precipice on its way down to the sea. Valuable as these African falls are to the tourist, with the general grandeur of African forests, yet even Tanganyika must march with the times. These falls are now being harnessed by British engineers for the supply of electrical energy to the various plantations and industries which have been established by British enterprise. I was glad to see so much British machinery in Tanganyika, and this country, I understand, buys a very high percentage of its requirements from England, thus helping in a measure the unemployment problem here.

After a few delightful days in this part of the world we flew back to Nairobi. The return journey unfortunately did not prove to be so delightful as that of a few days previous. Not only did we encounter one of the worst storms imaginable in which we were tossed about, in our very small machine, like a cork on the Atlantic, but when crossing the Athi plains we unexpectedly entered an extremely bad air pocket. It seemed as though our plane would never stop falling and my heart would never resume its normal pace.

It truly was a terrifying ordeal and I am sure was one of the biggest "bumps" I have had in my flying career.

XXVI

THE HAPPY MOUNTAIN

HUBERT is giving a house-warming to celebrate the completion of the house he has built himself with the lovely white stone quarried from his own estate. Now that the "Happy Valley" is but a memory of the past, we think Donya Sabuk might fill the gap and be the "Happy Mountain."

Those who come to this country have to hew out their own lives, building their homes, sinking their wells, or bringing water from the nearest source. Each new welcoming home means so much to a district where the settlers are often very scattered.

Hubert's party, as soon as it became known, was a topic of interest, everybody planning how to help him, and how many they could put up from the distant districts.

The great day arrived, and as the sun shone and the weather appeared settled, we arranged the garage as a supper-room. In this country no garages have doors, and this garage, of white stone built on simple lines, with supporting columns that gave it the appearance of a Greek Temple, was, like the living-room, far away the largest in the neighbourhood.

After lunch, Hubert took the men off to play a round of golf, while Timothy, Toby and I settled

down to the necessary work of cutting sandwiches and making fruit salad and lemonade. The mixing of the champagne cup was not entrusted to us. Bumps and Timothy were our house-party for the occasion, while James, who is living in the Mac-Masters' house during their absence, has stretched its capacity to an astonishing degree, and is putting up 9, and dining 22.

Some 20 of the party put in an appearance at six o'clock, bringing contributions to the feast. The Bumpses had brought some melons, while Dennis Wheetham had come from Nairobi with an immense bucket of ice. James, at the last moment, made a round of the neighbourhood, borrowing jugs and tumblers. Hubert, with the help of Bumps, had already started the serious work of the evening. Rows of buckets stood on the office shelves in which to mix the drinks, a recipe borrowed from the Muthaiga Club that must have been somewhat potent, as next morning some of the departing cars had swerved into the coffee shambas, breaking a few of the coffee bushes.

Dennis Wheetham had only lately returned from the Belgian Congo, where he went in charge of the transport of a party in search of the okapi. When in the Semliki forest, he lived among the Pigmies for some months, while trying to make friends and overcome their shyness. It was necessary to enlist their sympathies to help find the okapi. These tiny people can penetrate the thick bush and enter the forest haunts, which are inaccessible to the ordinary individual. The okapi has a purplish coat, which makes it almost impossible to see in the dense forest, even when but a few feet away.

SEARCH FOR OKAPI

This rare animal was first discovered in 1900 by Sir Harry Johnston, who sent its hide to the British Museum, who at first classed it as a new species of hyena, but it is now known to be a cousin of the giraffe.

In course of time a young okapi was secured, which had to be fed on milk from a whisky bottle. As the poor baby was about the size of a donkey, Dennis Wheetham, in misplaced zeal, forced bottles of milk down its throat, with the unfortunate result that it died shortly after reaching Kenya. It was a great disappointment, as the only okapi in captivity is in the Brussels Zoo.¹ Dennis Wheetham is only now recovering from the effects of those months spent in the close unhealthy atmosphere of the steaming Congo forests.

At 9.30 that evening a heavy shower of rain looked like upsetting our programme. Guests, however hungry and thirsty, could not be asked to cross the quadrangle to the garage. For once the rain was not welcomed, but just as we thought of carrying the supper into the veranda, it stopped as suddenly as it had begun. By ten o'clock cars were arriving; cars big and small, but every one of them full of years and scarred with the memory of honourable work and past encounters.

The exception was a large golden yellow Rolls, the pride of the district, which received the first wound of its young life when climbing the Dam Hill, the sharp top scraping its sump and leaving the long chassis straddled for a few seconds, while it made up its mechanical mind on which side to rest. Fortu-

¹ Since this was written, an okapi has been presented to the London Zoo by the King of the Belgians.

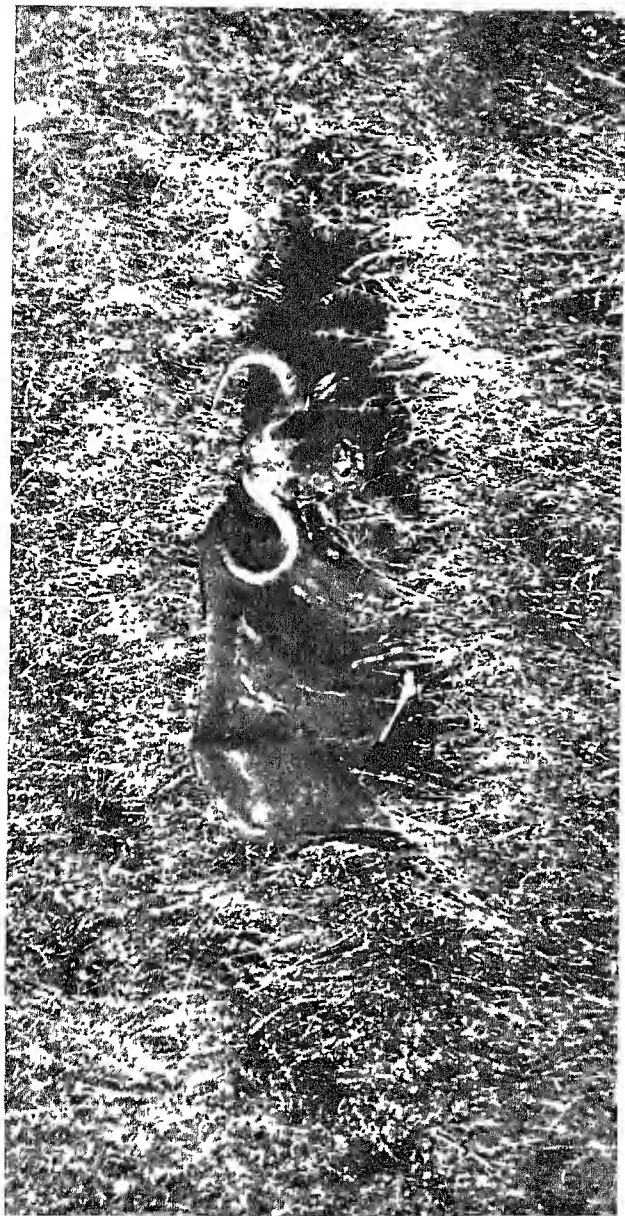
nately, it took the proper decision and went forward, as a Rolls should.

The guests the various cars discharged at the back door (the new drive had not been completed), were bent on enjoying themselves; it was the first dance to be given on the mountain and the great occasion was not to be missed.

As we danced to the music of the gramophone, supplemented by an amplifier, I wondered if the buffalo, descending from their forests to feed on the lower slopes, were listening to the strange noises evoked. Did they imagine some new monster had arrived to invade their sanctuary? I thought I heard a rhino snort in contempt; they knew their mountain was inviolate.

All went merrily till the early hours of the morning. Then the road, which could not at any time be described as an easy one, assumed the aspect of a nightmare to some of the departing guests. The dam had to be crossed and one of the most dreaded obstacles was the sudden turn on the steep incline where the Rolls had rested for the few heart-rending seconds earlier in the evening. The first car that attempted it came to grief, as instead of taking the turn after mounting the incline, it went straight on, toppling over the side of the road. Our local Rolls courageously followed shortly after, to be met by a lady in white with outstretched arms calling for help.

In the meantime, Timothy and I had gone to bed; it was 4 a.m. and we thought it time to try and snatch a little sleep; but we were both woken up by scared females rousing us to garbled accounts of a terrible accident. The lady who woke me was the owner of the Rolls and her description so terrified me that



BUFFALO IN LONG GRASS AT DONTY & SABUK

MOTOR MISHAPS

I imagined a road strewn with corpses. I found Timothy had been given an even more lurid version of the accident than myself.

Hubert, Bumps, James and Toby were rushing their cars to the scene of tragedy to render first-aid. They found the woman in white, and her lord, seemingly intact and consoling themselves with a smoke.

There were no corpses, only a derelict car, and the road made practically impassible for any others. Bumps, with the best intentions, added to the general confusion by getting stuck in the only possible place where a car could pass.

Toby went back to warn the other cars to go another route; it was only a track and perhaps ten miles longer, but who minds these trifles in Kenya? Toby had a small excitement of his own, for as he stood waving the cars to the side-track he saw a pair of sinister-looking eyes glowing in the lamp-lights, and the next moment a leopard vanished into the night—a silent reminder that this was Africa.

XXVII

KAPSILIAT

I HOPE my readers will not think I am exaggerating when I say that Kapsiliat is the most entrancing spot it has ever been my lot to stay in. Leaving Nairobi at 7 a.m. in a three-seater plane belonging to East African Airways, which company only started its career 6 weeks ago, so is yet in its early infancy, we reached Eldoret after 2 hours. I was the only passenger and the little plane rose like a bird to a height of 8,500 feet, to enable us to fly over the Kikuyu escarpment, past the Aberdares, and through the Rift Valley.

That grim crater Longonot, made memorable as the scene of Rider Haggard's novel *She*, was on our left, and we passed so close to the lip, that I could see into its sinister depths. Crossing Lake Naivasha, we flew over numerous small craters to Lake Nakuru, a dreary-looking expanse of water embedded in the Rift Valley and surrounded by high mountain ridges, whose soda-steeped waters hold no fish, only some hippopotami and once many flamingos. The drought has dried up the lake to such an extent, that most of the flamingos have deserted.

Beneath us, we saw what looked to me like pink moss, edging the lake, and floating in the water; it was difficult to believe they were flamingos. As I

LANDING AT ELDORET

was screwing up my courage to ask the pilot to fly lower to enable me to see them better, we rose another thousand feet. We were averaging a hundred and sixty miles an hour; Nakuru was already many miles away and we were rising to clear the Eldama Ravine and the forested heights of Ainabkoi; for some time we flew over this high ridge till we saw a plateau beyond, to which we made a rapid descent to Eldoret, where, owing to air pockets, we experienced a rather bumpy landing. I was glad to leave the plane, as the glass roof was unshaded and the sun soon became intensely hot and disagreeable. The plane was a Wacco from Ohio, where they evidently have no sun! I am told that our English machines have proper sun-blinds, which shows that we are blessed with more imagination than the Americans in Ohio.

While breakfasting at the small hotel, "The Pioneers' Rest," Mervyn Ridley arrived with his car. It was delightful to see him, as excepting for a brief glimpse at Nairobi last week, I had not set eyes on Mervyn or Sybil since they stayed with me at Glencarron some 6 years ago. Alas! Sybil will not be at her beautiful home to welcome me. When I saw her at Nairobi she was on her way to England, taking her little daughter to school.

As Mervyn had business to transact in Eldoret, it was midday before we started off for his estate in the Cherangani Hills, some 40 miles away. We travelled along the road that pierces the great plateau of Uasin Gishu. This plain, some six to seven thousand feet above sea-level, was once noted for the game to be found on it, but now we only saw a few topi. The topi is rarely seen in other districts of

East Africa—he belongs to the great Uasin Gishu Plateau and is a rare and beautiful antelope. His dark red coat is like silk shot with a blue tinge; his forehead and nose are almost black, and his underparts are a bright cinnamon. He is very good to look at and very good to eat.

On reaching the hills, we motored through a lovely green valley forested with every variety of acacias. We were now on Mervyn's estate, and climbing through the undulating wooded country it reminded me of England, a mixture of Sussex Wolds and smooth green hills like the Cumberland Fells. To our right flowed the Moiben River, which Mervyn has stocked with trout. Always ascending higher through woods, which here and there opened to show us glimpses of green hill and blue mountain afar, we passed through some gates which led us by green lawns, past groves of flaming shrubs, to the red-brick house, which, with its gables, brick pavements and wide loggias, gave the impression of an Old English cottage; a cottage within which were beautiful rooms, surprisingly big, and rare furniture; bedrooms a marvel of comfort, several bathrooms and electric light. The shingled roof and rose-pink bricks had all been made on this estate, while the fine panelling in the dining-room was cut by the saw-mill from the forest cedars.

Here, nearly 8,000 feet above sea-level, perched on the slope of Kapsiliat, was this charming home, created by the genius of my host and hostess on what had been a bare hillside. Great poda and cedar trees, the last remains of the old virgin forest, threw shade on the acres of grass lawn, while wide herbaceous borders filled with every variety of English flower, petunias purple and pink, phloxes, iris, delphiniums,

THE NANDI BEAR

led to further gardens enclosed in clipped hedges. A fountain played in a basin, round which ran a pavement of red bricks, carpeted with many-coloured verbenas, while roses, lilies and heliotrope made a tangle of loveliness and cannas bore immense trusses of flower that would raise the envy and astonishment of a gardener at home.

In the shade of the podo trees were clumps of yellow daffodils, grape hyacinths, and blue cinerarias. Beyond this enchanted garden was a park-like country, stretching down to a valley through which flowed the river Moiben, and farther on rose the forested hills of the Elgeyo Reserve.

Many miles away a steep hill reared its double-crested head to the west. This hill is shunned by the natives, who will not approach it by day or night, in dread of the Gareet, a sort of giant hyena, which is believed to inhabit its forests, and whose jaws are said to be so powerful it can snap off a leopard's head.

An even more fearful beast is the Nandi bear, which is thought to live in the dark fastnesses of these forests and has never yet been seen by a white man. The Nandi bear, or Chemsit, as it is called by the Nandi tribes, is still one of the unsolved mysteries of Africa. From the description of those who profess to have seen it, it is possibly a huge gorilla of unknown breed and very savage habit, as it will walk on all fours, can climb trees and stand upright. The force it uses must be tremendous, as its victims are found with throats torn out and crushed skulls, which shows colossal strength in the murderer, as the natives have very thick skulls. The Chemsit, whether gorilla or bear, strikes terror in the heart of every

native in the country round, who fear even to mention the terrible monster by name.

When one looks on this sunlit, peaceful country, it is difficult to realize the savage cruelty hidden beneath its smiling beauty. Only yesterday a buffalo killed a toto who was tending cattle in a clearing of the forest and severely mauled his father.

There is a salt lick on the edge of the forest and here the buffalo come in the early dawn and in late afternoon for the food they crave. It is almost always a sure chance of a shot. But none are killed unless they have shown themselves a nuisance and a danger, when the young English manager on the estate is asked to shoot the culprit. It is then the carnival begins. The natives rip away the skin and, naked as they were born, they dance about in an orgy of blood, tearing the flesh off the bones with their knives, wallowing in the warm blood, making it difficult for us to regard them as human beings. After the debauch, which may last a couple of days, they, like the boa-constrictor, will require no food for a time, while they sleep off the effects of their horrible feast.

After tea, Mervyn took us to see his horses. He has what is probably the best stud-farm in the colony. One fine stallion, by Tracery, a descendant of The White Knight, has won several races and is now going to the stud. The mares, foals and polo ponies are housed in loose boxes made of upright cedar poles, with thatched grass roofs built round a large paddock, and the black grooms appear to take pride in their beautiful charges.

The cattle on this estate of 10,000 acres, which is mainly agricultural land, number roughly a thousand

head. There is a large herd of graded cows, the result of pure-bred Red Poll bulls, imported from Suffolk, and the native cows, and after one crossing the cows have already lost their horns and humps. Masai herdsmen look after the animals ; they are the best cattle-men in the colony, and take a great pride in the welfare of the herds.

This estate, which is most perfectly run and has absorbed an immense capital, is self-supporting in everything except sugar and flour, and next year Mervyn hopes to be able to grow enough wheat to keep the house going in the latter. The capital sunk had yielded no return as yet, and while the prices of dairy produce remain beneath the cost of production there is no promise of better times. Let us trust that all the labour, hope and capital that helped to make this land fruitful will one day reap its reward.

XXVIII

A BARAZA

LAST night we were glad of the blazing fire, burning scented logs of cedar in the great open fireplace. After sunset it is cold in these high altitudes.

This morning I awoke to a sun and fragrance that made me think of an English June. Through my bedroom window I could lay hands on scented geraniums, heliotrope and verbenas; some hollyhocks flaunted pink and yellow against the wall, which a *Solanum Jasmanoides* smothered with pale mauve blossom.

We breakfasted in a veranda where flowers peeped at us from the brick columns, and the exhilaration of the mountain air made me feel happy and very hungry. The Provincial Commissioner and his delightful wife were fellow-guests; he was holding a Baraza of the Maraquet and Elgeyo tribes some 20 miles away. These tribes are thought to be off-shoots of the Nandi, who occupy the country near the Great Lake and, like the former, are renowned for their skill in killing lion or leopard with their spears in single combat.

The Baraza is a gathering of the tribal Elders, when they assemble by command, to discuss affairs and air their grievances, if any; and occasionally to explain

the reason why they have not paid their poll tax. The District Commissioner arrived at an early hour to accompany his chief to this local parliament, and Mrs. Welby offered to take me in her car to see it.

Our road lay through the Elgeyo Reserve, which is thickly forested and in which are many buffalo and sometimes elephant. Open glades of vivid green grass varied the landscape. We zigzagged up and down steep hills on a surprisingly good road, that had been made by an administrative officer during the War, with local labour and no help or instrument of any kind. After his death, a small obelisk with a brass tablet was erected to his memory by his brother officers in the King's African Rifles. This little monument stands in a glade beside the road, where it opens on a vista of blue hills. On it we read the following inscription, "To the memory of E. Popplewell, A.D.C. to this District in the years 1914-1917, who planned and made this road."

One can imagine this young officer eating out his heart alone among these savage tribes, cut off from all news of the world, till he at last succeeded in joining the regiment in which he met his death at the Front.

We again entered the forest, which became ever more beautiful; the cedars and podo were magnificent, and we saw for the first time the euphorbia as a forest tree, towering grim and sinister to heights of 60 feet or more. The ground was carpeted with ferns and tropical plants, while occasionally scarlet cactus, about a foot high, made splashes of colour in the damp mosses. At a small stream were a swarm of butterflies of a brilliant, iridescent blue, bordered by black. The moths and butterflies of Kenya are very lovely.

On arriving at the boma of Maraquet, we found

many warriors assembled, who, on seeing the P.C.'s car, stood holding aloft their spears in greeting, while from every direction through the hills came processions of old and young men. Some of the elders wore blue monkey skins, others had leopard or buffalo hides slung over their shoulders or hanging from their backs, while a few beads in front completed the simple decoration. In contrast to the scarcity of their toilet was their elaborate coiffeur. The hair of the young men was plaited with string, plastered with vermilion-red mud and buffalo fat, ending behind in a sort of pigtail, encased in a long horn-shaped receptacle, elaborately embroidered in blue and white beads, reminding me of the beard of the Pharaohs.

Many of the old men looked like small grizzled apes, but the younger warriors were fine figures and very graceful. One old lady in a leather kilt and beaded necklace stepped out beside them, the only woman present.

A tent had been erected, at the entrance to which sat the P.C. with the D.C. and an interpreter beside him, while interviewing the chiefs and tribal elders. Later he came out with the D.C. and sat under a large podo tree, from where he addressed the assembled multitude.

In the meantime we climbed a small hill to see the view that only Africa can give you. From this altitude of nearly 9,000 feet we looked over undulating forest and mountain, towards the Kerio Escarpment. Close beside us rose the Chepkemuir Mountain, with its haunting association of those weird inhabitants, the Gareet and the Nandi bear.

GHOSTS OF THE FOREST

In contrast to the grim menace of these monsters, there were many parrots flying joyously around, and several times some Colobus monkeys scampered past us ; to my mind the most decorative and attractive of the monkey species.

During the afternoon we persuaded Mrs. Welby to tell us of some of the strange phases of native life and interesting places she has visited, when accompanying her husband on safari. In particular were we fascinated to hear of the Sirikwa bomas in the Nzoia Valley.

No one, black or white, can explain the existence of these stone bomas, untouched by cement, but so intricately fitted together that they have withstood the many centuries since the Sirikwa vanished. No Kenya tribe has ever been known to build in stone, and a pot dug up in the neighbourhood of the bomas corresponded in shape with some that have been unearthed in Assyria.

This land is full of romance and mystery. On the coast, a few hours' journey from Mombasa, are ruined cities and buried treasures awaiting the excavator ; near them is the Forest of Illusion, a dark wood whose trees are unreal, coming and going like shadows, but whose ghosts are so real that the inhabitants are deserting their homes, compelled by an invisible force to abandon the district. It is said that once in the long ago, a white stranger, accompanied by a woman with pale hair, came to the country. The man carried a bronze spear and a copper bowl, and for many years he lived contentedly on the edge of the forest. One day the woman with the pale hair went into the forest and failed to return. The man grieved greatly and disappeared.

In a cave near Lake Elmenteita the skeleton of a man has been found—the skeleton of a white man who must have died 2,000 years ago . . . but only the ghost of the woman has been seen . . . in the Forest of Illusion.

The old Masai head herdsman, who in the glorious days of his youth had been a Moran (a warrior), came up one morning to see his master on a matter of business and was persuaded to stay and tell us some of the tribal legends. I think *Æsop* must have strayed into their country and borrowed some of his fables from the Masai, whose wealth of imagination and descriptive powers are extraordinary in a people that can put nothing down in writing.

One story was an exact counterpart of the Biblical one of Esau and Jacob, and occurred rather over a century ago. The Masai Esau, on losing his heritage, left the country and, with those of the tribe whose sympathies he had, settled in the Rift Highlands, but after two generations the descendants once again became blood brothers.

The old man deplored the good old days and fears for the next generation, for the young men are marrying into other tribes and no longer will they glory in feats of prowess. Raiding, with its night marches under the southern stars, its hasty meals in cover of the forest, the wild excitement of the conflict, is now a forbidden joy. The triumphant return across the plains, driving the looted flocks and singing, is but a memory that can never be lived again. . . . There are those who wish to tamper with the tribal laws. . . . The children are being

taught strange customs by the white men, whose shadow is creeping over the land, whose scornful influence is destroying the things the black men loved and revered. It is sad to see old traditions trampled in the dust. The old man wants to die . . . there is nothing more to live for . . . he does not wish to see the degeneration of his proud race.

This is my last day in beautiful Kenya ; to-morrow I return to Nairobi, where Toby joins me for our flight to England. This morning Mervyn motored me to the Elgeyo Escarpment, from which one sees what is perhaps the most awe-inspiring vista of mountain and valley in all the country. From the plateau on which we stood a precipice of sheer rock fell 1,500 feet to a purple-shadowed ledge beneath, carpeted with trees and about a mile in width. Then came another drop of 3,000 feet—ridge upon ridge of rock, wild and precipitous, rolling down into the dim depths of the Keria Valley, which is part of the Great Rift. Across the valley were the far ridges of the Kamasia Mountains, pale mauve in the golden sunshine, and the lakes Baringa and Hannington. To the west towered one of Africa's four great mountains, Mt. Elgon, whose 14,000 feet of rock seldom shows snow. An opal mist hid its nakedness, and far below the mist was the eternal forest. I am told there are caves high up among the rocks—beyond the forest—above the bamboo zone—caves of enormous size, once inhabited by ancient cavemen, but so long ago that the tracks that once led to them are lost. But on the south side of the mountain the mighty rock wall is honeycombed

with prehistoric caves, the homes of a mountain people. Strange men and women are said to live their isolated lives high up in the intense cold that is always experienced when 10,000 feet above sea-level. This hardy tribe and their forefathers have occupied these caves from time immemorial, and doubtless in the centuries to come their descendants will still share the caves with the bats and the ghosts of their ancestors.

One peak of Kenya, over 100 miles away, pierced faintly white to the sky. The rest was hidden in cloud.

To our right and left, sharp ridges and great jagged rocks cut the horizon. Below, in the deeper valley, game was plentiful. Elephant, rhino, lions, roamed in peace, undisturbed by man, because of the heat and fever in that low latitude. The grandeur, the impressive silence, the titanic size of the landscape were bewildering. One felt that here it was fitting to make one's farewell to Africa.

I am again at the Muthaiga Club, where Toby joins me. I feel myself back in an effete civilization. Toby has had a very successful safari. He and A. T. went first to Nanyuki, where Toby shot an oryx on the lower slopes of Kenya. They then went on to Embu on the east side of the mountain and descended to the Emberrri country in the Tana Valley. Here Toby succeeded in getting some good photographs of rhino.

While looking for buffalo, they bumped into two rhino ; it was open country and the rhino, with their feeble sight, could not make out what sort of animal

R H I N O C E R O S

was approaching. Toby got within 20 yards and was able to make a film before they realized that it was the enemy, Man, who was invading their sanctuary. They debated for a second or two whether to charge or run, and decided on the latter, snorting hard, with their little ears upraised. The buffalo were disappointing, for though Toby and A. T. followed the spoor for many miles, both in the car and on foot through the hot Tana plains, they never came up with them.

XXIX

FAREWELL TO KENYA

THIS morning, as the dawn broke, Hubert drove us from the Muthaiga Club to the aerodrome on the outskirts of Nairobi. Within a stone's-throw of this mushroom town of cinemas, shops and fashionable hotels, we were on the edge of the Game Reserve, and at this early hour we saw herds of antelope nibbling at the yellow grass, while striped zebras galloped across our road, and some repulsive wart-hogs scampered through the Bush.

One night, some months ago, a citizen of Nairobi, hearing something moving in his back garden and fearing thieves, looked out of his bedroom window, and by the moonlight he discovered it was a lion, taking his early constitutional. The startled citizen left his unwanted guest undisturbed, thereby showing discretion, for when day broke the lion had disappeared, doubtless to his own haunts in the Reserve, and this sensible proceeding on the part of both parties led to no evil result. There are plenty of zebra, the lion's favourite food, in the Reserve, and it is only when he loses his teeth and old age robs him of his spring, that the lion develops into that dread beast, a man-eater.

The sun had risen and in its light I saw Kenya Mountain; deep down in my heart was an ache at leaving this lovely, primitive land, where white men

and women are making their homes, wresting from the soil the harvestings of the fruits of their labours ; through their pluck and resource, through patience and high endeavour they are winning through the cruel years of post-War difficulties, ignorant criticism at home and misplaced sentiment. The land they occupy was once the immense "No Man's Land" where the antelope and lion roamed, occasionally visited by migratory pastoral tribes. The rich agricultural country was already in the possession of the native, and that land they still retain, held inviolate in trust for them. The white settlers often are hampered with a poor soil. They stand on the threshold of the unknown future, the traditions of a great colonial race behind them, and with problems as complex and difficult as have ever taxed our nation in the long years of history.

Though Kenya Colony covers over 200,000 square miles, its population is considerably less than that of London.

While ample opportunities exist, and land is available for development by the right type of pioneer, it is only fair to add that some years must elapse before any return can be expected ; and it is essential that the intending settler has capital behind him. The climate, apart from the drawbacks I have mentioned, is a glorious one and labour is cheap and plentiful ; while there is the joy of an outdoor life and the relaxation of sport, and more especially fishing to be obtained, for a ridiculously small sum, among the best trout rivers of the world and in lovely scenery.

To-day the vital problem of this country is the

adjustment of relations between black man and white ; the contact between an extremely advanced civilization and a primitive people, who though backward in their outlook, are both intelligent and eager for education ; have their own moral code of right and wrong ; and if treated as human beings many of them are prepared to give loyal service.

Britain has conferred on them many benefits ; has abolished the slave trade ; wiped out the Yaw Disease which periodically devastated the land ; put an end to tribal warfare and raiding ; and is doing all possible to stop the cruel mutilation of their women practised by the Kikuyu and some of the other tribes. Veterinary surgeons inoculate their cattle against the various diseases that ravaged the herds ; the result of which is the appalling increase of their number and the consequent demand that the Kikuyu are for ever making, for more land. The increase of the cattle is a problem the Government must sooner or later face. Nature has stepped in during these years of drought, and decimated the herds by many hundred thousand, but one prays that these terrible years are over, and that the herds will be kept under control by less devastating methods. Persuasion must be used, to urge the tribes to sell their cattle. At first some of them may revolt at the revolutionary idea, but for their own sakes, and the sake of the community at large, the sooner they are forced to realize the necessity of a market for their beasts, the better it will be for the country.

It is a sad fact that it is in the towns and European settlements you find the degraded African. It is invariably the worst he absorbs from contact with our civilization. At a reformatory not 5 miles from

Nairobi, over 90 per cent of the inmates are Mission boys.

The average native Christian is usually an outcast who is ready and willing to profess anything which promises him the likelihood of a soft job. To this class of individual a Mission presents an ideal field of operation. His designs are greatly facilitated by the vicious spirit of competition which is unfortunately so prevalent in missionary circles abroad. The spirit of rivalry, of reckoning success by a count of heads, by the number of converts obtained, must of necessity be fatal to any real missionary work. . . . What the savage needs is not religion, but education. . . . What he requires are Missions entirely secular and industrial.

Do not let us force upon him what must at present be an empty form of superstition. . . . Teach him to think and to reason; and thought and reason themselves will turn his mind to religion. . . . Let the priests of Christianity devote themselves to good works and conversions among the poor and needy in the teeming slums and courts of our great cities, whose need is so infinitely more pressing and pitiful than that of the negro or the Asiatic. Let the vast sums now devoted to the hopeless and needless struggle . . . for the souls of the coloured races, be spent on lay teachers and doctors . . . not on the useless struggle to force upon other races a faith unsuitable and undesired.¹

The native lives a crowded communal life; he is seldom alone; he has a family and often several wives. He undergoes his initiation to manhood in company with his fellows; he cannot read or write or withdraw himself from his tribe. If he is separated from his kind, he is bewildered; if confronted with new ideas that represent to him complete revolution, he is lost in amazement. With the breaking up of tribal life, the individual native is assailed with a feeling of incompleteness, and becomes a victim to

¹ *A British Borderland*, by H. A. Wilson.

FAREWELL TO KENYA

fear. It is then he seeks shelter with one of the many secret societies which offer him a refuge from his sense of loneliness. These societies are independent of tribal groups; they seek to develop unholy powers, and to obtain ascendancy over the native mind, and there is no doubt they are definitely evil.

The methods of the white man's court astound him. The effect on the native mind of a culprit whose guilt is well known, let off because of some technical flaw in the evidence, appears to him unjust, and is disastrous to a degree. Europe is introducing him to new criminal and civil laws that he fails to understand; to a social life where money takes the place of barter; to a religion which amazes him with a tale of a future life he cannot grasp; a religion which strikes at the root of all his old beliefs; takes from him his code of right and wrong and makes him conscious of his nakedness. This breathless rush of a civilization, which has taken Europe many centuries to evolve, is being forced on this primitive people in the space of one generation.

The natives have shown themselves intelligent, willing and capable in work; possibly in the near future they will occupy positions that up to now have been filled by imported labour, but progress must be slow. Do not take from these people their tribal laws, their discipline, till you give them something better in return. Their standards must not be broken down, the standards to which they adhere of their own free will. Leave them their self-respect, for "When a faith ends, a revolution begins."

XXX

GOLD MINES OF KENYA

WE are once again in the aeroplane on our flight to England ; and, rising above the houses, passing the shambas, skirting the Aberdares, we look down into the Rift Valley and the great primeval forests . . . all the old familiar landmarks we have learned to love.

On arriving at Kisumu, we found the hotel, where we went to breakfast, was being enlarged. There is much traffic now, for the Kakamega goldfields are not far off ; the goldfields that are to bring relief to Kenya.

No goldfield has been thrust into world-wide prominence more acutely than the Kakamega goldfield in Kenya Colony. With the discovery of gold by British farmers, the ever-watchful negrophilists in that colony and in this country, were loud in their protestations against the development of the country's resources, taking shelter under the parrot cry that mining would ruin the agricultural resources of the local native inhabitants. Once this note was struck in Kenya, it immediately re-echoed in those active negrophilist quarters in Westminster where no stick is big enough to beat the British settler in Kenya, and no action small enough not to be exploited against him.

GOLD MINES OF KENYA

Kakamega, from being an obscure and tiny unknown gold area, through the active propaganda of Kenya's critics, became, in a very short time, one of the best-known gold areas in the world. Far from succeeding as they had intended, in closing down the mining areas in East Africa, the results actually achieved in the advertisement given to the Kakamega areas, were that it turned attention more actively to the development of mineral resources in Kenya, and hastened up a development, which in the earlier days was looked upon with some suspicion.

It was explained to me that though comparatively small gold-bearing areas were discovered before the War, together with various other minerals, such as coal, iron, copper and mica, development did not proceed with very great strides, due to many adverse factors. In those days, of course, gold was not the attractive commodity it is to-day and its value was not of such potential significance; consequently finance was not readily available for prospecting on a scale necessary to explore the vast regions where undoubtedly gold was to be found. Perhaps also the existence of more positive discoveries in earlier years, in another and far greater known part of Africa, where fabulous fortunes were being made, was in a measure responsible for the lack of interest displayed towards gold mining in the region then known as "darkest Africa."

The difficulties of transport, where roads did not exist, and the absence of any data to guide would-be pioneers and enthusiasts, no doubt contributed also to the neglect of such a valuable development. After the War, with the general opening up of the country, possibilities hitherto unknown were disclosed, and

THE KAKAMEGA GOLDFIELDS

East Africa began to attract active attention as a possible field for the prospecting of gold. Combined with the assistance of the local governments, who established systematic surveys and prepared reports and geological maps, large areas were located which proved to contain gold-bearing reefs, but it was not until nearly 10 years later, when important discoveries were made at Kakamega in Kenya Colony, that interest of any great importance was shown from outside sources. The amazing discoveries of alluvial gold, not only in the Kakamega areas, but also in the Lupa goldfield in Tanganyika, caused a considerable stir, and quite a few small fortunes were amassed by those lucky prospectors—most of whom were Kenya farmers suffering from drought and the general world depression—who had pegged out claims. Here again was an indication of the spirit of Kenya, because once more it was the wives of settlers who took the field, and many encouraging discoveries must be attributed to the women who acted as supervisors, and generally took a hand in those earlier days. It is a pleasant reflection to feel that, though millions were not made overnight, farms and homesteads were kept together by the timely discovery of gold.

The finding of gold, to such an extent, and at a time when its intrinsic value had attained such meteoric levels throughout the world, no doubt was to a degree responsible for the tremendous interest which has since been displayed. With the advent of aerial transport in East Africa, locomotion has been made considerably easier and the difficulties of communication have been practically entirely removed. When it is realized that it is now possible to reach the

GOLD MINES OF KENYA

goldfields of both Kenya and Tanganyika in a few hours after leaving the coast, and compare this with the arduous safaris undertaken in former days, very often perilous and uncomfortable, taking weeks and sometimes months to accomplish, it will be appreciated how tremendously valuable aerial conveyance has been to the development of these gold areas throughout East Africa. In addition to supplying the needs of speedy transport to and from the goldfields which are mostly in outlying areas, the aeroplane has proved to be invaluable for the surveying of prospective areas. It was also explained to me how the old process of prospecting and surveying has now been considerably improved upon by the aid of aerial photographs, which naturally disclose a different perspective, and enable preliminary surveys to be undertaken with greater speed. It has also assisted tremendously in the location and building of better and more direct roads for heavy transport, so essential for supplying provision of stores and mining necessities.

I understand quite a number of sound companies are now operating successfully in the Lupa, Mwanza and Musoma goldfields amongst other areas in Tanganyika, and also in the Kakamega district of Kenya. These companies have passed from the stage of alluvial prospecting and are now concentrating on the opening up of reefs, tracing their length and testing their depth and yield. I was told how some of the veins discovered have been found to contain rich ore, and on the whole very satisfactory results have been achieved.

An indication of the tremendous progress that has taken place in Tanganyika alone in the development of gold, is given in the Government reports, which

show that in 1923 the output of gold was 1,325 ounces valued at £4,906, whereas ten years later in 1933 it had risen to 39,533 ounces during the year, valued at £201,886.

It is, of course, early days to predict the future of this young and newly-developed discovery and one must await the outcome of the immense development programme now being pursued. I understand it is anticipated that results will more than fulfil expectations. The expenditure of the vast sums entailed in such development have considerably relieved the general internal position of the East African territories. Coming at a time when most of its main exportable products are suffering so severely from the present financial depression existing throughout the world, it has undoubtedly proved to be a boon to the depleted resources of the countries' budgets. In some quarters the contention is held that a second Rand has been found. There is no doubt that considerable sums are being spent in the country on labour wages, and a large amount of valuable machinery is being carried by British ships to East Africa for installation there.

The universal discovery of gold and other minerals right through Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika, has once more emphasized the necessity of putting these three countries under one system of administration, and the general desire for federation is evident everywhere. The feeling in Tanganyika is that the natives and other residents would feel much safer if a federation was brought about. There is active and virulent propaganda constantly being carried out in England and in Tanganyika for the return to Germany of a colony which she has amply proved herself to be unfit to govern.

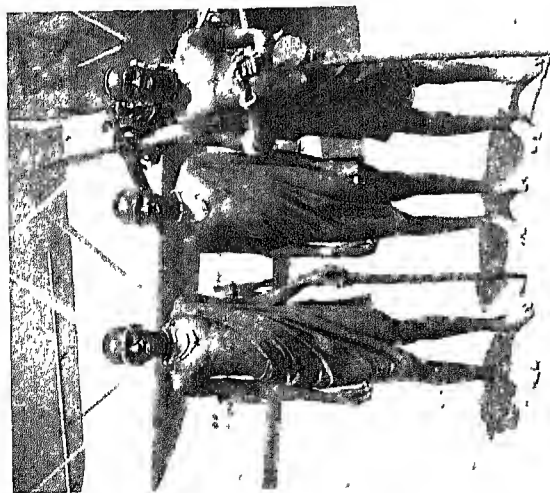
XXXI

BACK TO EUROPE

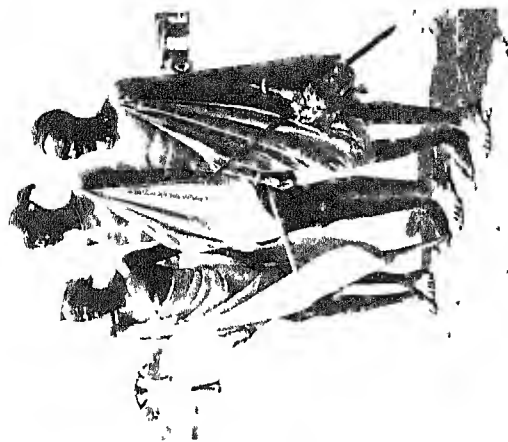
WE step into the great air liner, which carries us across the African deserts to the Mediterranean Sea. Gathering her strength to lift her weight of thirteen ton and more ; “whirling in spirals to the sky—making furrows in the clouds”—she sails over desert and jungle.

At Juba we found the heat intolerable ; although it was late in the afternoon when we alighted, the thermometer registered 120. It had touched 134 during the day and all the government offices were closed ; the hottest April for many a long year.

After a restless night, we left Juba before the dawn, but in a few hours we were bumping badly with the heat. Our pilot, Captain Powell, took us up from three to nine thousand feet, but it was no use. We bumped till some of us were very ill, but it was cool and the relief was great. Among the passengers was the well-known pioneer and designer of aircraft, de Havilland with his wife, and they carried in a small portmanteau three chameleons they had brought from Nyeri. The largest was a beautiful green fellow, about six inches long. They had been well fed with flies and grasshoppers, which meal was supposed to last them till they reached England ; each night



SHILLUKS AT MALAKAL



HAIR DRESSING
IN THE SUDAN DESERTS

on arrival they were given a saucer of water and much enjoyed their bath.

The south-bound air liner Hadrian passed us near Malakal. In it Maud B. and Dorothy M. were travelling on their way to Kapsiliat, where Mervyn was expecting them. I sent them a wireless message. As they probably had no idea I was out here, they must have felt some surprise at being suddenly greeted in the African desert.

It was while refuelling at Malakal that some Shilluks, drawn by curiosity, clustered round the plane. This tribe who inhabit the deserts of the Bahr el Zeraf and Fashoda make fine soldiers and as fighting men have no equal. They are considered the pick of the King's African Rifles, as they once were the pick of the Mahdi's and Khalifa's armies. In battle it is difficult to restrain their desperate courage. They are a contented people, taking their pleasure in fishing and hunting, in which latter pastime they show much skill. They are fairly successful agriculturists where the soil lends itself to cultivation. Away from the Nile they go completely naked, but wear a small loin-cloth when approaching the river. They devote great attention to their hair, though on every other portion of their bodies all growth is stopped by its being carefully plucked out at the very first appearance. The Shilluks who crowded round the plane had their hair clotted with applications of clay and gum, to make it retain the desired form according to individual taste, which occasioned the young dandies to present a variety of head decoration.

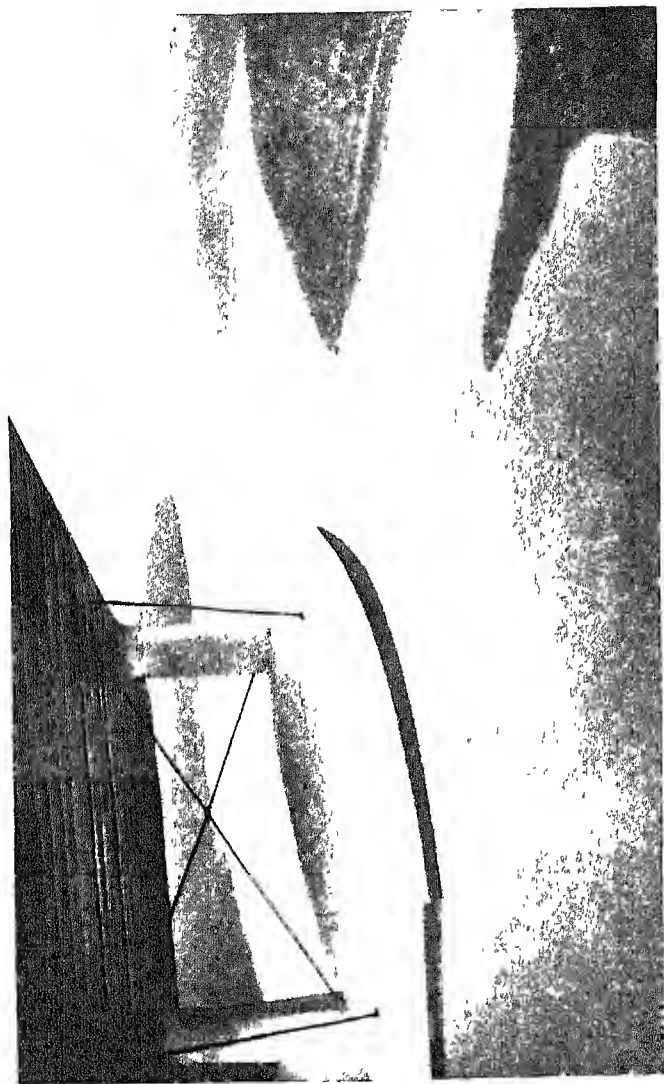
Khartoum was left behind ; it was the third day ;

we were weary of the endless wastes of desert, but it was cooler and the full moon would be shining on the temples of Luxor, where we were due to pass the night. We flew low over the Great Dam near Assouan to enable us to see that huge structure that man has raised to confine the waters of the Nile, assigning to himself the power to control its flood ; surely a miracle of craftsmanship. But a year ago the mighty waters, descending from the mountains of Abyssinia and the Great Lakes of Central Africa, swept down in a torrent that made the engineers fear for the safety of the dam ; for some hours its fate was in suspense.

With a north wind against us we only reached Luxor as the sun set. After dining at the Winter Palace, most of the passengers went off to explore the wonders of Karnac by the light of the moon, while Toby and I, with our faithful old friend Hamid Abdulla, contented ourselves with visiting the little old mosque perched among the pylons of the Luxor Temple. The excavators were longing to lay hands on this ancient mosque, but their one effort raised such a storm of protest that they were forced to bow to the will of the Moslem population. In the mosque lies buried the remains of that saintly person Sid el Hagagi, who lived a thousand years ago, a mere flea-bite in time in the land of the Pharaohs, and many of those who delve for treasure must wish that El Hagagi had never existed.

It was very peaceful in the precincts of the mosque, with the moon flooding the temple beneath.

Next day we passed from Upper to Lower Egypt, reaching the Heliopolis aerodrome outside Cairo for lunch, which we ate in that gorgeous hotel which a



FLYING OVER GREEK ISLES

Belgian king built, wishing to out-rival Monte Carlo. But the Egyptian Government refused a gambling-licence, and a Belgian syndicate took the great palace over as an hotel. Its alabaster hall and balustrade were quite beautiful and the carpet in the hall, woven in one piece, is thought to be the largest in existence.

That night we slept in Alexandria ; it felt very cold after the heat we had endured and everyone put on their winter garments. Rising early next morning, we entered the seaplane to bear us to Athens. The Greek Revolution was over and Imperial Airways had resumed their route by Crete and Athens to Brindisi. The alternative route, via Malta, meant a loss of 24 hours in time.

Crete looked lovely in the spring sunshine ; its mountain peaks deep in snow and the sea a wonderful blue. Among its range of hills the sacred mountain Ida towered to a height of 8,000 feet ; hidden in its slopes is the cave where Zeus first saw the light, for Crete is the cradle of pro-Greek civilization. Rising to 6,000 feet we flew over a desolate country of tawny orange hills and deep ravines, to a blue bay where lay the yacht on which the passengers embarked, while the plane is filled with petrol. As we may not set foot on Crete, this yacht made a welcome break in the monotony and confinement we endure in the seaplane, punctuated every two hours with a meal ! Imperial Airways looks well after the inner man and does its level best to add to our weight with its excellent food, but if we exceed our allowance of 220 pounds, including ourselves, we have to pay ! Imperial Airways also gives us food for thought ; the latest periodicals are always in evidence on the tables, from the sporting *Field* down to the garrulous

Tatler, with a *Bystander* often standing by and the *Queen* lending dignity to the occasion. From this I hope my readers gather that Imperial Airways wish its passengers to enjoy themselves.

Crete is left behind, with its disorderly inhabitants and bandits, but one wonders if they can make a living out of the arid soil if they do not bandit. Milo, another island, lay on our left ; except for a few patches of vine and olives, it looked equally barren. Evidently Byron saw qualities in the Greek islands that are hidden from me. I do not think they can compare with the Western Isles of Scotland. Perhaps I am prejudiced.

On arriving at the Piræus, we were allowed ten minutes on shore to stretch our legs ; we could only admire the lovely Acropolis from a distance. We then returned to our aerial hotel for lunch. Leaving Athens, which showed no wounds from her recent revolution, we flew over its gulf and along the deep canal that cuts Greece in two from the Ægean Sea to the Gulf of Corinth. The sea, bordered with jagged hills, came to meet the canal, and the hills looked as if they would scrape our plane with their pointed needle-tops, on which rested little gossamer clouds. What made for the beauty of the landscape were the snow-clad mountains, whose peaks rose dazzling to the sapphire of the sky, while the lower slopes held nothing but scrubby little woods and were most uninteresting when not relieved by cypress trees.

But soon the most lovely of islands came in sight on our right hand. Corfu, a land of enchantment, whose groves of myrtle and aromatic shrubs I have often brushed on my way to bathe in the little creeks of warm sea ; whose tall cypresses stand sentinel

over the stone bastions of the ancient harbour. To the north, behind the island, stretched the snow mountains of Albania, grim ramparts of a fierce land and an independent warrior people.

We had crossed the Adriatic, and the flats of Italy's shores are difficult to distinguish where they touch the sea. If the Adriatic had a tide, most of the country would be submerged for half the time. Brindisi's War Memorial to her sailors, the monstrous keel of a ship in yellow brick, towered over the harbour and did not enhance its beauty. We circled round till, pointing to the wind, we glided into the sea, whose waters churned up in foaming wonder at the strange monster that had invaded them.

Soon a launch arrived to take us to the custom house; here we experienced tragedy. While at Alexandria the passengers had handed over their cameras to Imperial Airways; these had been put in a box and carefully sealed, by the wish of the Italian Government, whose delicate nostrils scent spies in every breeze wafted from foreign lands. An Italian official seized the precious box of cameras, and, while carrying it to the custom house, the seal was broken; with the result that the cameras were confiscated and their films removed. It was heart-rending for poor Toby to watch his precious reels of elephant films being taken, as well as many other photos of peculiar interest. It was useless to protest, as all the comfort they gave us on returning the empty cameras was that we were lucky not to have them confiscated as well.

With heavy hearts we went to the hotel to await our

train, in which we will spend two nights and a day ; with a break of some hours at Milan giving us time to see and admire the splendid memorial the Milanese have raised to their dead—a railway station which must be unique in all the world.

Arriving in Paris punctually at 7 a.m. on a Sunday morning, we breakfasted at the “ Hôtel des Ambassadeurs ” in the Boulevard Hausseman, and again joined a plane to fly us to Croydon.

It was foggy over the Channel and we mounted above the murky darkness into the pale sunshine of April, while the clouds beneath us looked lovely as an Arctic sea of drifting snow and ice.

But in England it was clear and the sun was shining brightly. As we reached the shore it broke through the mist, and we could see the Kent landscape, green fields and woods, a kaleidoscopic pattern beneath us. It is good to be in England in April ; though the winds may be cold there is the promise of spring, a verdant upbursting of bloom and scent that no other land can give. The small fields and shadowy trees, the tender green of the country, the winding roads and clustered cottages offer to the returning traveller a welcome sense of home and security. What if the snowdrifts and hailstorms occasionally step in between the shafts of young sunshine ? The elusive English spring with its fairy texture of morning mist, its smell of teeming earth and lovely growing things, give a feeling of joyous anticipation of the exquisite summer to come.

At Croydon the de Havillands found their newest plane awaiting them to take them to Stanmore, and, bidding them farewell, Toby and I entered our motor for home. . . . But my thoughts often stray to

ENGLAND ONCE MORE

the unknown Africa, whose fringes I have barely touched, but whose forests of tropical splendour ; whose vast plains where beauty and terror stalk hand in hand ; its mountains, its rivers, all wield a charm ; while calling me to return is the hospitality of the men and women fighting their grim battle against drought, locusts and endless difficulties, with a smile on their lips, with eternal hope and courage in their hearts, pioneers of whom the Mother Country can indeed be proud.